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A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

BEING —

A PARAPHRASE,

WITH

NOTES,

SHEWING

THE LITERAL MEANING OF THE
PROPHECY.

BY THE REV. ALEXANDER FRASER,
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT KIRK HILL.

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TO
THE RIGHT REVEREND
RICHARD HURD, D.D.

LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER,

THE FOLLOWING

COMMENTARY

ON THE

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH,

IS

MOST HUMBLY

AND

RESPECTFULLY

INSCRIBED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

TO

THE RIGHT OF FRIEND

RICHARD HURD, D.D.

COMMISSIONARY

INSCRIBED

1877

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH

P R E F A C E.

THE prophets, in all the messages which they delivered, had particular persons and times in view. A knowledge of these, and the suitableness of the messages delivered to the conditions to which they are applied, is what I call the literal meaning. Sometimes they have the men of their own times in view, sometimes those of a distant age. With the events which they detail, they mingle plain precepts, pathetic exhortations, sharp reproofs, and powerful consolations. Hence they may be perused with advantage, by those who are strangers to their literal meaning. There is that similarity in human hearts, and in events which relate to men; there is that inimitable propriety of expression, in the language

of the Spirit of God; which makes the instructions contained in these writings, applicable to the men of every nation, and of every age. However, these instructions come with additional force to the heart, when we understand the literal meaning. They are more clear and convincing, when the characters described are known, and the events foretold are accomplished.

It is more difficult to ascertain the literal meaning of the prophet Isaiah, in many passages, than that of any other of the prophets. The reasons are, The sublimity of his sentiments, and the abruptness of his manner. He launches into his subject at once, without prefixing any historical narrative, which would lead us to discover the times and persons he has in view. But I apprehend that the literal meaning may be ascertained, by the aid of the rules which I have laid down in my "Key to the Prophecies, which are yet to be accomplished." I offer the following interpretation as an illustration of these rules.

Isaiah was son of Amos, who (according to the Jewish tradition) was brother to king Uz-

ziah. He prophesied above sixty years, and was (if we may credit the Jews) fawn afunder by order of Manasséh. The apostle is supposed to allude to him, Heb. xi. His education seems to have been suitable to his birth. His language and imagery are sublime ; his reproofs pointed ; his exhortations animated ; his consolations reach the inmost recesses of the heart ; and his predictions of the Messiah's person, doctrine, sufferings and kingdom, are so many, and so clear, as to have deservedly procured him the title of the Evangelical Prophet.

APPENDIX

1. The first of the three is a list of the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the text of the book. The second is a list of the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the text of the book. The third is a list of the names of the persons who have been mentioned in the text of the book.

A

COMMENTARY

ON THE

PROPHECY OF ISAIAH.

CHAPTER I.

THE ARGUMENT.

IT appears to me, that from the beginning to verse 24. the prophet describes the character of the Jewish nation in our Saviour's time, and the calamities brought upon them by the Romans. My reasons for this application are the following :

1. The 9th verse is applied by the apostle Paul, Rom. ix. 29. to the few in our Saviour's time who looked for salvation in Israel, and were not involved in the general corruption of the nation ; consequently the rest of the passage connected with the 9th verse, must refer to the same time*.

2. Verses 25, 26, 27. contain a description of the millennium. The expressions are the same used every where by the prophets, in describing that period†. Now the connection implies, that the calamities previously described, are those occasioned by the Roman dispersion ; for this last, and not the Babylonish captivity, terminates in the millennium.

3. The circumstances of the description, apply to our Saviour's time more clearly and fully than to any other period. The wickedness of the Jewish nation had come to the greatest height. They were incorrigible, and therefore disinherited. The desolation described was literally fulfilled. Their sacrifices, as detestable, were

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* See Key to the Prophecies, Part I. Rule 2.

† See Key to the Prophecies, Part I. Rule 4.

by the providence of God prevented; and these punishments were inflicted for the crime of shedding blood, the blood of the Messiah, ver. 15.

Having described the character of the Jewish nation in our Saviour's time, and the calamities brought upon them by the Romans in consequence; he proceeds, ver. 25, 26, 27, to describe the millennium, when their calamities shall terminate, and they shall be again restored to the favour of God, and the possession of their land.

From ver. 28 to the close, he describes the destruction of their enemies, which is coeval with their restoration; and is effected chiefly by the battle of Armageddon.

THE PARAPHRASE.

THE TEXT.

THE prophetic messages, which Isaiah, the son of Amos, received from God, in the way of vision*. They chiefly concern the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. He received them at different times, during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; including a period of above sixty years.

THE vision of Isaiah, the son of Amos, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem; in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

2. Hear, all ye beings in heaven and on earth, (it is **JEHOVAH** that speaketh); attend to the charges I bring against my people Israel. Notwithstanding I have acted the part of a father to their nation, by admitting them to the knowledge of myself, and to the privileges of my children, in preference to other nations: Notwithstanding I have continued to bestow on them many temporal mercies, and much spiritual instruction; they have proved ungrateful children, by continuing disobedient to my precepts, in heart and life.

2. Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.

* God communicated his mind to the prophets in various ways. 1. To Moses he spoke "face to face," Exod. xxxiv. 2.; which mode of communication he never vouchsafed to any other prophet, Num. xii. 6. 2. He spoke to Samuel by an audible voice; but it is evident Samuel saw no appearance whatever, for he ran to Eli, fancying he had called him from the adjoining chamber, 1 Sam. iii. 5. This mode of communication, is called open vision, 1 Sam. iii. 1. 3. A different kind of vision was given to this prophet, chap. vi. and to Daniel repeatedly. The external senses seem to have

been wholly suspended during the continuance of the vision, while the scene described in the vision was represented to the prophet's imagination. 4. At other times God communicated his mind by a dream, when the prophet was asleep, Num. xii. 6. 5. But most frequently by making an impression on the mind, without the intervention of the bodily organs, though the prophet was awake, and capable of exercising his external senses. By the third and last mentioned of these ways, God seems to have communicated his mind to Isaiah.

3. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

4. Ah, sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; they are gone away backward.

5. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint:

6. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment.

7. Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire, your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers.

3. Their ingratitude to me discovers a degree of sottishness, which degrades them beneath the level of beasts: for the ox, though not remarkable for sagacity, is obedient to the hand that feeds him; and the ass, a proverb for stupidity, returns to the crib where he receives his provender. But my people Israel acknowledge not my hand so as to obey me, from whom they receive all things; neither do they lay to heart my goodness, so as to rely on me in their need.

4. Alas! they have filled up the measure of their wickedness. The whole nation is corrupted, their sins are of a heinous nature, they follow the steps of their rebellious fathers; adding iniquity to their iniquity. Not satisfied with doing wickedly, they encourage others to do the same. They are wholly destitute of true religion, and yet provoke the God of Israel, who is holy, by their hypocrisy. Their depravity is beyond recovery.

5, 6. As mercies cannot produce gratitude, so neither can chastisements work correction; repeated chastisements, instead of softening the heart to submission, have only hardened them in wickedness; so that the spiritual condition of individuals, and the body politic, may be fitly compared to the state of the human body desperately diseased; in which the organs most necessary for life, the head and heart, are become the prey of the distemper; while the disease appears outwardly all over the body, in loathsome putrid sores, which must speedily occasion dissolution; for though God, as a kind physician, hath provided healing medicines, and repeatedly applied them, the patient has contemptuously rejected them, or violently torn them away.

7. As so great wickedness deserves punishment, God shall inflict punishment. It is ordained, and that secures it as effectually, as if it were already accomplished. Your country, given by promise to your fathers, and rendered fertile by the blessing of God, shall be uncultivated and barren; your cities shall be burnt; your substance shall be consumed by foreign enemies, and ye shall not be

able to prevent it. Your desolation shall be greater than ever you experienced at any former period, from your neighbours. It shall be a complete overthrow, by a people at a distance from you, and now strangers * to you.

8. The polity of the Jewish nation, civil and religious, shall be dissolved; it shall differ as much from their present establishment, as the meanest straw-built shade reared in a vineyard, or garden of cucumbers, for protecting the fruit till it ripens, differs from that glorious building the temple. The city now crowded at the solemn festivals, shall be deserted, like a city demolished and waste after a siege.

9. But that JEHOVAH, the God of Hosts, shall preserve a few by his grace, from the general corruption of their times, our nation would be as conspicuous for their sins, and for their punishment, as Sodom and Gomorrah.

10. Ye rulers of Judah, similar in manners to those of Sodom, hear the word of JEHOVAH; ye people of Judah, as corrupt as those of Gomorrah, attend to the charge which your God brings against you.

11. What avails the outward observation of the sacrifices enjoined by the law? saith JEHOVAH. Though they are offered to me, and not to idols; though you offer them regularly, abundantly, and of the most costly kind; I delight not in the performance of the outward act of sacrificing, while you are ignorant of its spiritual meaning, as typical of the death of the Messiah.

12. When ye present yourselves at the Sabbaths and solemn festivals in the temple, to perform the service enjoined; do you suppose that your outward appearance is all I require, and not rather that you should learn from the service, to

8. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city.

9. Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah.

10. Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, give ear unto the law of your God, ye people of Gomorrah.

11. For what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of rams, or of he-goats.

12. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?

* Bishop Lowth supposes the word **זָרִים**, translated *strangers* in the later part of the verse, should be **מַבְרִיחַ**, an *inundation*, considering the repetition of the word as an useless tautology. I apprehend it is intended rather to mark the time when the prophecy should be fulfilled. The Jews were acquainted in Isaiah's time with the Baby-

lonians and Assyrians, as well as with their nearest neighbours, the Edomites, Moabites, and Ammonites; but the Romans, whom the Spirit of prophecy has in view, were at the time strangers to the whole world. The end of Uziah's reign was the seventh year after the building of Rome.

subdue your irregular lusts and passions, and offer up to me your devout affections.

13. Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; the new moons and the Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

14. Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them.

15. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.

16. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

13. All the offerings enjoined by the Mosaic law are unprofitable; the substance represented by these being come, the shadows are no longer necessary. As being unprofitable, I do, by the same authority which formerly enjoined them, now forbid * them.

14. The further observation of these offerings, and the appointed solemn feasts, I cannot endure: I declare it to be sinful, as much as the violation of any moral precept †: as such I will effectually prevent it ‡.

15. Your prayers are unacceptable, as well as your sacrifices: though offered up to me with much fervency, I will pay them no attention, neither will I grant your requests; because ye are guilty of shedding the blood of the Messiah ||, as your fathers shed the blood of the prophets.

16, 17. In order to be restored to my favour, you must be washed, by being baptized in the name, and justified by the faith of him whose blood ye have shed §; ye must be cleansed by receiving his Spirit to convert and sanctify you; you must shew that your conversion is real, by abhorring your

* Bring no more vain oblations.

† The sentiments are the same with these: He that sacrificeth an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol, chap. lxvi. 3. They apply fitly, and only, to the period after our Saviour's appearance.

‡ In these four verses concerning sacrifices, God insinuates the following particulars: 1. That the Jews were chargeable with hypocrisy, in not looking to their spiritual meaning, and attaining their moral end. 2. That they were, at the period to which the prophecy points, unprofitable. 3. That the law enjoining them was repealed. 4. That continuing to observe it after the repeal, was sinful. 5. That God would effectually prevent the further observation of it, in the course of his providence. The four first declarations are proved to be true, by the doctrine of Christ and his apostles; the last, a historical fact, is verified by the

event. The Jews, ejected from their country by the Romans, and continuing in a state of dispersion ever since, are effectually prevented from offering sacrifices: for by the law, they could only be offered in Jerusalem.

|| The guilt of shedding blood is expressly charged upon the Jews by our Saviour, John viii. 44. Luke xi. 50, 51.; and in the parable of the vineyard, Matth. xxi. 33. Mark xii. 1. Luke xx. 9. he charges them with shedding the blood of the Messiah, and assigns that as the cause of their being rejected by God, and deprived of their privileges.

§ These are the terms on which the apostles offered remission of sins to the Jewish nation, Acts ii. 38. I consider the prophet as personating them from ver. 16. to 21.; and foreshewing the last offer of mercy that should be made to the Jews, previous to their rejection.

past transgressions, and resolving to forego sin for the future; you must learn to practise positive holiness, by doing justice, and shewing mercy, especially to those from whom you expect no return, as the fatherless and the widow.

18. If ye comply with these terms, you may come near to me, as your reconciled God: I will converse with you, and permit you to open up your cause before me, saith JEHOVAH, as a father, who admits his offending children into his presence. I will convince you, that you may look for the pardon of your sins, in a consistency with righteousness. Though your sins are of a heinous nature, though their guilt and their pollution are indelible as a crimson colour, and scarlet dye that cannot be washed out; yet if you rely by faith on the blood of the Messiah, shed for the atonement of sin, your souls shall be washed from their guilt and their pollution, and made white as snow, fair as wool.

19. If ye cheerfully submit to the Messiah, and be obedient to the truth, your temporal mercies shall be continued, ye shall enjoy the advantages of the land ye possess, and these shall be the earnest of an eternal inheritance.

20. But if ye refuse to submit to him, and continue refractory, ye shall be destroyed by the sword, and its attendant miseries; for JEHOVAH hath resolved upon it, and declared it by the mouth of all his prophets.

21. I foresee these exhortations will have no influence on the generality of the nation. How has the nation, once faithful to the marriage-covenant of her God, now violated that covenant, by rejecting her Lord and Head! The time was, when the inhabitants of Jerusalem were famous, her rulers for their equity in dispensing justice, her people for their uprightness; but now they are alike infamous, as the murderers of the Messiah.

22. Your degeneracy in religion and righteousness is exceeding great, as silver reduced to dross, or wine deprived of its taste and flavour by water*.

17. Learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.

18. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

19. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land.

20. But if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

21. How is the faithful city become a harlot! It was full of judgment, righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers.

22. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixt with water.

* An image used for the adulteration of wine with more propriety than may at first appear, if what Thevenot says of the people of the Levant of late times, was true of

23. Thy princes are rebellious and companions of thieves; every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards; they judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the widow come unto them.

24. Therefore, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the mighty One of Israel, Ah! I will ease me of mine adversaries, and avenge me of mine enemies.

25. And I will turn mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin.

26. And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counsellors as at the beginning; afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city.

27. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

28. And the destruction of the transgressors, and of the sinners, shall be together; and

23. Your rulers, who, in consequence of their authority, should enforce the obedience of others, are the first to violate the commandments of God. Instead of correcting villains, they are sharers with them in their unjust gain. Instead of regarding the duties of their office, they only seek to make profit of it, and therefore pervert justice to procure bribes; and where no bribes can be obtained, as from the fatherless and widow, their cause they neglect.

24. Therefore the Lord JEHOVAH, the God of hosts, who entered into covenant with Israel, solemnly declares thus. Though with reluctance, I will cease to contend with a people that are such enemies to my will and law; and since they rejected the offers of reconciliation, I will treat them as enemies, and satisfy my justice by inflicting signal punishments on them.

25. But however severe and long continued the punishments inflicted shall be, I will not utterly destroy you, nor reject your nation for ever. But as the precious metals are refined from dross and alloy by the furnace; so your sins shall be purged, and your tempers rectified, by the afflictions I will send upon you.

26. When ye are thus delivered from your sins, I will restore you to your land, and give you rulers having my Spirit, such as I gave your fathers, when they were first settled in the land; and from that period, your nation shall be famous for upright morals and real religion.

27. In a word, your national church shall first be visited by signal judgments; afterwards those who are restored shall be justified by the righteousness of the Messiah, and sanctified by the influences of his Spirit; and these several dealings shall deliver them from sin, and the evils consequent upon it.

28. At that time, when the Jews shall be restored to their own land, all the wicked, and the enemies of religion then on earth, shall be col-

them formerly. He says, "They never mingle water with their wine to drink, but drink by itself what water they think pro-

"per for abating the strength of the wine." Lowth's translation of Isaiah, notes on the place.

ected together into one place *, and shall be consumed there by one blow.

29, 30. Then such of their party as remain, shall be ashamed of their superstition and idolatry, which gave encouragement to every kind of wickedness †; and thus resembled the worship of Ashtaroth in the groves, where many acts of vileness were committed, as acts of devotion. Then ye ‡, O enemies of the true religion, shall be deprived likewise of the wealth and delicacies of the world, which ye enjoyed for a season; and which made your society resemble the garden of Eden for delights. For the vail which covered your superstition shall be drawn aside, and its vileness detected; as if the grove of Ashtaroth were stripped of its foilage, and the impurities practised underneath its shade, made visible to every eye. In consequence, the wealth and delicacies of the world, with which the credulity of mankind supplied them, shall be withheld. Hence you may be fitly compared to a garden that has no water, because the river that rendered it beautiful and fertile, is dried up ||.

they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

29. For they shall be ashamed of the oaks which ye have desired; and ye shall be confounded for the gardens that ye have chosen.

30. For ye shall be as an oak whose leaf fadeth, and as a garden that hath no water.

* Armageddon.

† The party meant are the supporters of spiritual Babylon. Now the Popish tenets have refined on the devices of paganism, to lull conscience asleep, and encourage men to gratify their lusts, particularly their doctrines concerning venial sins, penances, absolution, indulgences, dispensations, pilgrimages, jubilees, &c. &c.

‡ Though there is a transition from the third to the second person, yet I consider the words of the prophet in this, and the two following verses, to relate to sinners mentioned in the preceding verse; not at all to the Jews: such transitions are frequent. An address to the people against whom the judgment is denounced, makes the discourse more animated.

|| In the hotter parts of the Eastern countries, a constant supply of water is so absolutely necessary for the cultivation, and even for the preservation and existence of a garden, that, should it want water but for a few days, every thing in it would be burnt up with the heat. "Damascus, (says Maundrell, p. 122.) is encompassed with gardens, extending no less, according to common estimation, than thirty miles

round; which makes it look like a city in a vast wood. The gardens are thick set with fruit trees of all kinds, kept fresh and verdant by the waters of Borrady, (the Chrysoorhoas of the ancients,) which supply both the gardens and city in great abundance. This river, as soon as it issues out from the cleft of the mountain before mentioned, into the plain, is immediately divided into three streams, of which the middlemost and biggest, runs directly to Damascus, and is distributed to all the cisterns and fountains of the city. The other two, (which I take to be the work of art,) are drawn round, one to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the borders of the gardens, into which they are let as they pass by little currents, and so dispersed all over the vast wood; insomuch, that there is not a garden but has a fine quick stream running through it. Borrady is almost wholly drunk up by the city and gardens.

"The best sight, says the same Maundrell, p. 39. that the palace of the Emir of Berool, anciently Berylus, affords, and the worthiest to be remembered, is the orange garden. It contains a large quadrangular plat of ground, divided into sixteen lesser

31. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them.

31. Every effort for the preservation of their system any longer, shall be ineffectual: its most powerful supporters may be compared to tow, and its most zealous defenders to a spark; the zeal of the one, and the efforts of the other for defence, shall kindle a fire, ending in their mutual, and perpetual destruction*.

squares, four in a row, with walks between them. The walks are shaded with orange trees of a large spreading size. Every one of these sixteen lesser squares in the garden was bordered with stone, and in the stonework were troughs, very artificially contrived, for conveying the water all over the garden; there being little outlets cut at every tree, for the stream as it passed by, to flow out, and water it. The royal gardens at Ispahan are watered just in the same manner." Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, on the place.

* Compare this with the sixth and seventh vials, Rev. xvi. and you will find a striking coincidence. The sixth vial represents the great zeal of the emissaries of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, to support the beast, in the declining state of his affairs; as well as the great efforts of the kings of the earth and their armies stirred up by these emissaries. The seventh vial represents the issue of these efforts. It shews that they ended in the destruction both of the emissaries, and the forces collected by them.

CHAPTER II.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter is a further illustration of the glorious restoration mentioned verses 26. and 27. of the preceding chapter, with a fuller account of the destruction of the enemies of religion, coeval with that restoration. The terms Judah and Jerusalem are used to denote the gospel church, Gal. iv. 26. In verses 2,—4. the prophet describes the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, at the period which immediately precedes the millennium. The conversion of the Jews, verse 5. In verses 6,—9. the sins which occasioned the previous rejection of the Jews. In verses 10,—22. he shews the punishment of the enemies of religion, particularly the beast and his adherents, which accompanies the restoration promised.

THE TEXT.

1. The word that Isaiah, the Son of Amos saw, concerning Judah and Jerusalem,

2. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains;

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. THE circumstances which Isaiah saw concerning the gospel church.

2. In the days of the Messiah, particularly after the last state of the fourth monarchy is finished, (Daniel ii. 44.) the church of God shall excel in glory and authority, all the kingdoms and empires

of the world; and all nations shall be members of that society.

3. Many nations, now strangers to the true God, shall encourage each other, saying, "Come, let us be members of the church of Christ, that we may enjoy the privileges of God's household, which once pertained exclusively to the seed of Jacob; he will make us acquainted with the dispensations of his grace, and we will walk in obedience to his precepts; for it is from the church we learn the true doctrine of salvation, and there God has revealed his will by his word*.

4. Accordingly God shall set up the government of his grace over the nations. He shall by it correct their fierce passions; so that they who lived in mutual and continual war, shall mutually embrace, and eagerly promote the blessings of peace.

5. At that time, ye also that are the natural seed of Jacob, shall be successfully exhorted, to come to the God from whom ye were long alienated; and so submit to the light of that gospel, which ye once rejected.

6. That they shall be rejected for a time, previous to their submission to the gospel, thou, O Lord, hast shewed me; even that thou wilt forsake thy people, by withdrawing thine ordinances. Because they are addicted to various kinds of divination, which they have learned either from the Chaldeans to the East, or from the Philistines to the West; because they rely more on the seed of strangers, in their distress, than on thy protection.

7. Because their great object in the land thou gavest them, is, to amass wealth; and procure magnificent furniture and equipage, to gratify their covetousness, or please their vanity.

and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.

3. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

4. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

5. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.

6. Therefore thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers.

7. Their land, also, is full of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures: their land is also full

* The terms *Zion* and *Jerusalem* may be here taken in a literal sense, and so the passage implies. That the doctrine of salvation shall be first preached to the Jews, and afterward extended to the gentiles. This has

been true of the first propagation of the gospel, and will be verified after the millennium, when "the receiving again of the Jews shall be life from the dead" to the gentile churches.

of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots.

8. Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made.

9. And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself; therefore forgive them not.

10. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty.

11. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

12. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low;

13. And upon all the cedars of Lebanon, that are high and lift-

8. Because they are addicted to every species of idolatry; at one time, to the gross outward idolatry practised by their heathen neighbours; at another time to that secret heart-idolatry, which bestows on created objects, that love and affection which is competent to thee only.

9. And with this sin men of all ranks are chargeable, high and low, rich and poor together. For these reasons thou wilt not forgive them, until thou hast inflicted punishment upon them.

10. But after the period of their punishment is accomplished, and they are again restored to the favour of God and their own land, all the enemies of religion then upon earth shall receive a great overthrow*. And those that remain of them shall betake themselves to fastnesses in the rocks, and caves in the earth; for fear of the Majesty of God, displayed in the conduct of his Providence.

11. Then shall antichrist be humbled, the proud usurper of the rights of the Deity; (even that king who did according to his will, and exalted himself, and magnified himself above every God; and spake marvellous things, against the God of gods," Dan. xi. 36. "He who opposed and exalted himself, above all that is called God, or is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself to be God," 2 Thess. ii. 4.) The high claims of this usurper shall be brought low, and his power shall be thoroughly broken; while the Lord alone shall be exalted, by the dealings of his grace, and by the dispensations of his Providence.

12. That day which God hath appointed for taking vengeance on his enemies, shall humble proud sinners of every denomination; particularly the followers and allies of the antichristian usurper.

13. On that day punishment shall be inflicted on kings and princes, who are raised by their rank and station above the vulgar; as the cedars of

* At Armageddon.

Lebanon are higher than the grafs: On men of understanding and literature, who supported the usurper's claims, and to appearance rendered his schemes firm as the oaks of Bashan.

14. Kingdoms and societies shall be dissolved, which existed for ages, notwithstanding the shortness of human life; and so resemble mountains and hills, which are unalterably the same, while the forests that grow upon them are continually changing.

15. Vengeance shall overtake the schemes of politicians, and the efforts of warriors. They shall prove ineffectual for defence.

16. Vengeance shall overtake the (superior and inferior) clergy of antichrist, who carried on for a long time a profitable trade with the world, and so resembled the merchants of Tarshish; and the trade itself shall be abolished*; while the costly images, plate, and other furniture of their chapels, shall be taken away.

17. Thus the high claims of antichrist shall be brought low, and his power shall be thoroughly broken; while the Lord alone shall be exalted, by the dealings of his grace, and by the dispensations of his Providence.

18. And God shall destroy from the earth all idolatry.

19. For the few that remain attached to it shall retire from society, like outlawed fugitives, to conceal themselves in dens and caves; for fear of that punishment, which God inflicts on idolaters in the course of his Providence, and in which his glory is displayed; for at that time, God shall effect a thorough and great change in the moral world, like that produced in the natural world, by an earthquake†.

* See Rev. xviii. 11. "And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth her merchandise any more. ver. 17. And every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off," &c. On which passage Danbrige observes, Rome receives all the luxurious wares mentioned, but she has so infatuated the world, that she pays nothing for them but trumpery. Her superior clergy ingross all the real wealth of the world, to bring it to her; and her returns and exportations are in paper and bills

ed up, and upon all the oaks of Bashan,

14. And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up,

15. And upon every high tower, and upon every fenced wall,

16. And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures.

17. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.

18. And the idols he shall utterly abolish,

19. And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

drawn upon heaven and hell, never to be accepted. However these pass among the common people in payment, as if they were of great value. The merchant who finds means to get of them, takes no care about their intrinsic value, finding gulls who take them off his hand for real wealth.

† See Rev. xvi. 18. where the apostle, speaking of the same times, says, "And there was a great earthquake, such as was not," &c. and ver. 20. "Every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

20. In that day, a man shall cast his idols of silver and his idols of gold, which they made, each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;

21. To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

22. Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?

20. At that period of Divine vengeance, those who have the most costly images, and which they formerly worshipped, instead of trusting in them for defence, shall bury them under ground with the moles, or throw them into dark caverns where the bats lodge.

21. And shall betake themselves to inaccessible precipices, and obscure retreats, for fear of that punishment which God inflicts on idolaters, in the course of his Providence; when he shall effect a thorough and great change in the moral world like that produced on the natural world by an earthquake.

22. Let not the unbelief of the righteous suggest, nor the false confidence of the wicked induce them to imagine, that these predictions shall not be accomplished, because they are improbable to human appearance; for what are the efforts of frail mortal men, in opposition to God who has revealed these things.

CHAPTER III.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter lays before us the calamities which beset the Jews, in the decline of their government, which ended in its dissolution by the Romans.

Though there was a temporary suspension of their government by the Babylonish captivity, yet many of the circumstances of this description cannot apply to that event.

THE TEXT.

1. For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff, the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water.

2. The mighty man, and the man of war, he judge, and the pro-

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. THE days shall come, when JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler of the Universe, shall withdraw his presence from Judah and Jerusalem; and together with it the blessings they enjoy, in which their comfort, and the stability of their government, consist. Particularly he will deprive them of the very necessities of life, and send extreme famine, when closely besieged by their enemies, in their cities.

2. He will weaken their government, and finally dissolve it, by denying the spirit necessary to men,

according to their several stations in society. The chief ruler shall have neither ability, nor authority: the soldier shall be destitute of courage: the judge of righteousness and discretion: the prophet shall have no message from God: there will be no prudent men, to give counsel in time of need: nor ancient men to direct by their experience.

3. The commander shall have no conduct: the man of rank, no respectability: the counsellor, no wisdom: the artist, no skill: the orator, no eloquence.

4. For thus hath God said, I will appoint rulers over them, as unqualified for their station, as if they were children or sucklings.

5. This weakness in the government shall encourage the people to oppress each other; because they may do it with impunity. All order shall be overturned, all ranks shall be confounded.

6. In this desperate state of affairs, no man will venture to be chief ruler, though urged by his friends to take the office; well knowing, that it would expose him to expence, and to the resentment of those whose wickedness he would not be able to restrain.

7. For God has ordained, that Jerusalem shall be desolate, and that the government of Judea shall be dissolved.

8. But these judgments shall come upon them, consistently with justice, because they provoked God constantly by their language and conduct, notwithstanding the many evidences given them of his omniscience and glorious Majesty.

9. Their impudence in sinning is sufficient to condemn them. They refuse to be ashamed, Jer. iii. 3.; they feel no remorse, though the wickedness of their conduct has been frequently represented to them, by the prophets; they will not even pretend shame, by concealing their wickedness; but avowedly practise and defend their sins,

phet, and the prudent, and the ancient,

3. The captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.

4. And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them.

5. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable.

6. When a man shall take hold of his brother, of the house of his father, saying, Thou hast clothing, be thou our ruler, and let this ruin be under thy hand.

7. In that day shall he swear, saying, I will not be an healer; for in my house is neither bread nor clothing; make me not a ruler of the people.

8. For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen, because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.

9. The shew of their countenance doth witness against them, and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not: woe unto their soul, for they have rewarded evil unto themselves.

10. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.

11. Woe unto the wicked, it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him.

12. As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee, cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.

13. The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.

14. The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

15. What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor, saith the Lord God of hosts?

16. Moreover, the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks, and wanton eyes, walking, and

after the manner of Sodom. Alas for their souls! They have brought punishment upon themselves.

10. But let the righteous be assured on my veracity, however afflicted for a season, that it shall be well with them in the end. They shall not be disappointed of a reward.

11. On the other hand, let the wicked be assured, though they prosper for a season, punishment shall take hold of them at last, suitable to the crimes they have committed; for there is a day appointed, when God will reward every man, according as his works have been.

12. As for you who were once under my protection, persons feeble as children oppress you; those who are timid as women, keep you in bondage; for you have neither strength to resist, nor courage to deliver yourselves. You who were once under my guidance, (how lamentable the change!) are now directed by teachers, who mislead you by precept and example, and thus conduct you to certain destruction.

13. This state of affairs will justly provoke God to execute judgments on the whole nation, it shews those judgments to be near, that the judge standeth at the door.

14, 15. Particularly JEHOVAH will execute judgments on the rulers civil and ecclesiastical; for their government is impious and unjust: impious, in consuming that people who are God's particular inheritance; and unjust, in depriving the poor of their effects, for the gratification of their own lusts. But let me ask you that are rulers, what advantage do you expect to reap from your gross oppression of my people? Is it not to amass wealth, and advance the dignity of your families? Consider it well, and you shall find, that oppression will prove a canker to consume your wealth, a curse to destroy your families.

16. To shew further causes of these impending calamities, JEHOVAH saith, Because the Jewish women, particularly those of high rank, are chargeable with haughtiness and lewdness, which they shew by their gestures and dress:

17. The Lord shall therefore punish them suitably to their sins: he shall afflict them with sores in the head, which shall induce them to hang it down, instead of haughtily raising it up: and he shall strip them of their ornaments, by the hands of their enemies; so that instead of superfluities, the dress left them shall be scarce sufficient to cover their nakedness.

18.—23. The several pieces of dress used as incentives to lewdness, shall be taken away from them; their jewels, worn by them to gratify their vanity, shall become the prey of their enemies.

24. Whereas they now use perfumes, are completely dressed, have well set hair, neat persons, and delicate complexions; the hardships of their captivity will occasion a sad reverse. The hard labour and coarse fare, to which they were unaccustomed, shall occasion an unfavoury smell from their bodies. These too shall cover them with rags; occasion baldness on their heads; induce them to wear sackcloth on their loins; and tan their complexions.

25. Whereas their dress was intended to inveigle the men, they shall be disappointed of their aim; for the men, especially the brave, who were most desired by them, shall fall in the war.

mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet.

17. Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab, the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts.

18. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon,

19. The chains and the bracelets, and the mufflers,

20. The bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs, and the head bands, and the tablets, and the ear rings,

21. The rings, and the nose jewels,

22. The changeable suits of apparel; and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins;

23. The glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.

24. And it shall come to pass, that instead of sweet smell, there shall be stink; and instead of a girdle, a rent; and instead of well set hair, baldness; and instead of a stomacher, a girding of sackcloth; and burning instead of beauty.

25. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.

26. And her gates shall lament and mourn, and she being desolate, shall lie upon the ground.

26. The destruction of men shall be so great, that the cities shall be desolate, having none passing through their gates.

CHAPTER IV.

1. And in that day, seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.

1. Such shall be the scarcity of men at that period, that seven women, neglecting the modesty peculiar to their sex, shall, unsolicited, offer themselves to one man; declaring they will relinquish the claims of a wife upon her husband for maintenance, if he will only permit them to be called by his name, and be the father of their children.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE first verse should have been added to the former chapter. It describes the calamities brought upon the Jews by the Romans. From the second verse to the close, the Prophet describes the state of the Christian church, coeval with the fall of the Jews. Lowth supposes this chapter to be a description of the latter days, or state of the church during the millennium. My reasons for applying it to the primitive church, are these:

1. The description begins with the words, "in that day," which limits it to the period coeval with the dispersion of the Jews, mentioned immediately before.

2. There is frequent mention of a remnant as enjoying the privileges mentioned ver. 2,---13. Now in the latter days, all Israel shall be saved, Rom. xi. 26. But at the first propagation of the gospel, the bulk of the Jewish nation was rejected, and there was only a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom. xi. 5. who obtained the privileges of God's people.

3. Every part of the description fully agrees with the state of the primitive church, as we shall see.

THE TEXT.

2. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely, for them that are escaped of Israel.

THE PARAPHRASE.

2. At that time of universal depravity and great affliction, JEHOVAH shall have a people to serve him; for the branch that shall grow out of the roots of Jesse, Isa. xi. 1. the righteous branch which God shall raise up for David, even the King, whose name is the Lord our Righteousness,

Jer. xxiii. 6. though rejected by the bulk of the Jewish nation, who shall esteem him a plant sprung out of a dry ground, having no beauty that they should desire him, Isa. liii. 2. yet to a remnant of the Jews, and to the Gentile nations, he shall appear beautiful and glorious; for they shall behold his glory, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth," John i. 14. and the gospel of salvation published in his name, shall be like seed sown into the ground, which shall produce fruit abundantly: as an handful of corn on the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake as Lebanon, Psal. lxxii. 16. and the fruits produced, shall be the virtues of heart and life, which are excellent and comely in the sight of God and man.

3. For this remnant, whether of Jews or Gentiles, shall be justly reckoned saints, even they whose names are written in the Book of Life, who "are chosen to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth."

4, 5. Such women as are among them, shall be separated from the sins of their contemporaries, and adorned as becometh women professing godliness, with good works. And the men, though involved in common with the rest of their nation, in the guilt of shedding the blood of the Messiah, shall be pardoned, when instructed by the Spirit of wisdom and revelation to discern their sin and their Saviour; that Spirit which kindles love in the heart, so that they receive the truth in the love of it. As formerly in the wilderness God manifested his presence with, and protection of Israel, by a pillar of cloud and of fire; so at the period mentioned, his presence and protection shall be given to his people, in their private retirements, as in their public assemblies. Wherever there are members of his church, esteemed by him his glory, he will afford them protection.

6. As formerly God commanded to erect the tabernacle of the congregation, as the symbol of residence among his people; so in the days of the Messiah, where two or three are gathered in his

3. And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.

4. When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem, from the midst thereof, by the Spirit of judgment, and by the Spirit of burning.

5. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling-place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence.

6. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day-time from the heat, and for a place of re-

fuge, and for a covert
from storm and from
rain.

name, he will be present with them. With every individual that loveth him, he will constantly make his abode, John xiv. 23. All his people shall be a spiritual priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices; each shall have the same privilege with the High Priest, access to the holiest of all, Heb. vi.; and this freedom of access to a throne of grace, will afford counsel and protection, amidst all the temptations and calamities incident to human life.

CHAPTER V.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE design of the spirit of prophecy in this chapter is, to vindicate the justice of God, in rejecting the Jewish nation from being members of his church, by shewing their sin and their punishment together. They were chargeable, in some degree, with the sins mentioned in the prophet's days and downward; but these sins came to their greatest height, about the time our Saviour appeared, and from that period to their dispersion by the Romans. This last event seems to be the punishment in view, and not the Assyrian invasion, or Babylonish captivity, as some have imagined; for,

1. Our Lord uses the parable of the vineyard with little variation from the prophet, and applies it to the Jews of his own time, and the punishment brought upon them by the Romans. Now, his application affords a high probability, that the prophet had the same times and persons in view. This too may be the reason, why it is called a song of God's well-beloved; because the Messiah, who is eminently such, should have occasion in his time to use this parable, as a lamentation over an ungrateful people.

2. The punishment here threatened, was not inflicted in its full extent, even by the Babylonish captivity: for God declares, that his vineyard "shall not be pruned nor digged, and that he will command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it;" that is, that he will withdraw all outward means of instruction, and deny inward grace. Now, during their captivity in Babylon, they had prophets specially commissioned of God for their instruction, besides the priests their ordinary teachers; and there were among them many persons eminent for their piety: whereas the threatenings here denounced, were executed to the full, by the Roman dispersion.

3. It is said, ver. 30. "If one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof."

Darkening the lights of heaven is a mode of expression common with the prophets, to represent the dissolution of any government. In similar terms our Saviour describes the dissolution of the Jewish government by the Romans. "Immediately after the desolation of those days, shall the sun be darkened, and the moon not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven." A certain shadow of government remained to the Jews, during their captivity in Babylon, exercised by the Heads of the captivity, with consent of the Babylonish government: but no appearance of jurisdiction or subordination among themselves, remains with them, since their dispersion by the Romans. It is evident, therefore, that the prophet has the latter event in view.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus God addressed me: To shew the justice of those punishments which I will in due time inflict on this people, I will dictate to you a song, to be learned and sung to the honour of the Messiah, my well-beloved Son. It is a song which the Messiah will take up in his day, as a lament over the Jewish church, which may be fitly compared to his vineyard.

The Messiah (as head over all things to the church) planted his church among the Jews, on whom he bestowed a good land, and every temporal advantage; together with the means of grace, and every spiritual benefit; to make them abound in the works of righteousness.

2. He took them under the special care of his providence, to defend them from outward injuries; gave them the law and the prophets, to rectify inward corruptions. Their church-establishment he formed, and it was originally wholly pure. He erected his temple, the symbol of his residence in the midst of them; and used every argument, by his word and providence, which could operate on the human heart. But whereas he had reason to expect in their conduct, those works of righteousness that are the effects of divine grace, he found only those sins, that are the produce of corrupt nature.

3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, the parties, I will permit you to be judges, in the cause betwixt me and my church; so obviously is right on my side.

THE TEXT.

1. Now will I sing to my well-beloved, a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard. My well-beloved hath a vineyard, in a very fruitful hill;

2. And he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a wine-press therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes.

3. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my vineyard.

4. What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes.

5. And now go to; I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard: I will take away the hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up; and break down the wall thereof, and it shall be trodden down.

6. And I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged; but there shall come up briars and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

7. For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

8. Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place; that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth.

9. In mine ears, said the Lord of hosts, of a truth many houses shall be desolate, even great and fair without inhabitant.

4. Declare, if you can, what mean have I neglected that might be profitable to my church? If you cannot specify any, what have you to offer in arrest of judgment? Seeing I had reason to expect the works of righteousness, that are the effects of divine grace; and ye have produced those sins, that are the fruits of corrupt nature.

5. But since you have nothing to offer, come, and hear the sentence which I pronounce on my church. I will withdraw the protection of my providence, and enemies shall devour their land and their substance. I will dissolve their government, and they shall be contemptible among the nations.

6. Their land shall be deprived of cultivation, and their souls of instruction. I will withdraw the outward means of religion, and deny inward grace; so that they shall be sunk in irreligion and immorality.

7. The church which he shall thus punish, is the people of Israel and of Judah, a people who were once his peculiar pleasure, but now hateful to him; because the rulers, instead of dispensing justice, committed oppression; and among all ranks, instead of the practice of righteousness, he found an universal cry of fraud and violence.

In proof of his charge, that they produced the fruits of corrupt nature, God commanded me to testify against the sins common among them.

8. I do therefore, in his name, denounce vengeance against the worldly-minded persons, whose covetous heart is insatiable, who grasp at the fields and houses of others, by fraud and violence; while their ambition is so great, that they can bear no equal.

9, 10. JEHOVAH, who is the sovereign ruler, hath informed me, by undoubted inspiration, that he will punish such covetous, ambitious oppressors, suitably to their crimes; for whereas they chase the poor from their habitations by oppression, their own houses shall be desolate; though they build great and splendid houses, from a notion that they shall be the dwelling places of their posterity for ages, they shall be uninhabited, as mo-

numents of divine vengeance. Though they multiply vineyards and fields, God shall blast their increase, for their vineyards shall not yield the hundredth part of their wonted produce; nor shall their fields return above a tenth part of the seed sown in them *.

11. I denounce vengeance against drunkards, because, in following the gratification of their appetite, their time is mispent, and their passions are inflamed.

12. They are under the influence of the lower appetites of their nature; for it is the business of their lives, and the desire of their hearts, to enjoy music, wine, and feasting, while they wholly neglect the admonitions, conveyed by thy word and Providence.

13. Therefore, since their dissipation prevents them from acquiring a knowledge of the tendency of my dealings, so as to be corrected by lesser punishments; though once my people in covenant, they shall be sent into exile, from their native land. As they formerly rioted in superfluity, they shall be punished with want; persons of all ranks shall experience a scarcity of the very necessities of life, bread and water.

14, 15. For the same reasons, they shall be punished with premature death †, the ordinary consequence of intemperance: but in their case, as their appetite is insatiable, the consumption of the grave shall be without measure ‡; while in a future state they shall receive their portion, in the place allotted for the punishment of the wicked. And from these punishments they shall not be delivered, by their grandeur, their number, their attendants, nor by the joy of their festivity, which induced them to imagine, that they should never experience a change of condition. Men of all

10. Yea ten acres of vineyard, shall yield one bath; and the seed of an homer, shall yield an ephah.

11. Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them.

12. And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands.

13. Therefore, my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge; and their honourable men are famished, and their multitude dried up with thirst.

14. Therefore, hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it.

15. And the mean

* A bath was equal to 7 gallons, 4 pints, English: now 10 acres of vineyard produced, at an average, betwixt 700 and 800 gallons. The ephah for dry measure was the same with the bath, 7 gallons, 4 pints. The omer was 7.5 gallons, 5 pints, so that an ephah was very near one tenth of the homer.

† The word *sheol* in the original, signifies the state of the dead, and so may include premature death, and eternal punishment.

‡ Josephus' account of the siege, and taking of Jerusalem, by Titus, fully verifies the expressions of the prophet.

man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.

16 But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness.

17. Then shall the lambs feed after their manner, and the waste places of the fat ones shall strangers eat.

18. Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope.

19. That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it; and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh, and come, that we may know it.

20. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

ranks shall be humbled, and every species of pride shall be brought low.

16. But the sovereign Ruler of the universe shall be exalted, and his righteousness and holiness shall be conspicuously manifested, in the judgments which he shall execute on these incorrigible sinners.

17. At that period of general degeneracy and affliction, such as are my faithful servants, the humble followers of the Great Shepherd, shall be sustained by my grace, and protected by my Providence, as they have been in similar perilous occasions formerly. But the inheritance of my nominal servants, because they are proud persecutors and sensualists*, shall be laid waste by their dispersion, and strangers shall devour their substance.

18, 19. (I denounce vengeance against them who contrive mischief in their imagination, though they should never have an opportunity to accomplish it; as well as against those who by their ingenuity practise wickedness beyond their strength†). While they scoff at my denunciations of judgment, saying in their hearts, if not with their lips, If God is offended with our conduct, why does he not execute judgment speedily? If he does, we shall be convinced that he is offended; but if he delays, as he certainly does, we may presume that he is not offended, and that we have no reason to fear‡.

20, 21. I denounce vengeance against those who confound all the distinctions betwixt virtue and vice, though they are as perceptible to the unbiassed understanding, as the difference betwixt light and darkness to the sight, and as evident to the rectified conscience, as the distinction of bitter and sweet to the taste. But these hate the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd; they have sear'd their consciences, by a habit of sinning, so

* Ezek. xxxiv. 20, 21, 22.

† The burden too weighty for a man to carry, he puts it into a cart, and by fastening a horse to it, drags it along with ease.

This wisdom which God gave for useful purposes, is by some perverted to the worst of ends.

‡ Eccl. viii. 11. Because sentence, &c.

as to feel no remorse, like the vitiated taste which approves of what is bitter. I denounce vengeance against those who are conceited of their own understanding and attainments, so as to set their knowledge in opposition to Divine revelation.

22, 23. I denounce vengeance against them who boast of their strength in bearing much strong drink, and excite others to the same intemperance. Those persons that are under the influence of intemperance readily pervert justice, by justifying the wicked, or condemning the just, from a prospect of pleasure or profit to themselves.

24. Therefore, on account of the prevalence of these sins, the whole nation shall be punished with a signal destruction; like the consumption of chaff or stubble, by the fire. Though settled in their land by the power of God, Psal. lxxx. 8, 9. they shall be dispossessed, as a vine rotten at the root is easily plucked up. The prospect of their growing greatness shall be blasted, as the blossom that falls untimely; especially for their despising, instead of improving, the means of grace afforded them.

25. God is justly offended with his people; he has resolved to punish them; he will execute his decree as certainly as if it were already accomplished. The rulers shall be driven from their authority, and multitudes shall be slain in their streets, when closely besieged by their enemies; yet after these severe punishments, God shall not admit them immediately to his favour, but continue them under his afflicting hand for a time.

26. The instruments in his hands for inflicting these punishments shall be a nation remote from Judea; for it is an easy matter with him to collect troops, from the most distant corners. Such is his power over his creatures, that he requires but to whisper secretly in the heart, and from the extremities of the earth, they who know him not, run speedily to execute his purpose.

27. The length of the journey shall not occasion weariness, nor the roughness of the road stum-

21. Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.

22. Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink.

23. Which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him.

24. Therefore, as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust; because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

25. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them, and hath smitten them; and the hills did tremble, and their carcases were torn in the midst of the streets: for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

26. And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth; and behold they shall come with speed swiftly.

27. None shall be weary, nor stumble among them; none shall

slumber or sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken.

28. Whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flints, and their wheels like a whirlwind.

29. Their roaring shall be like a lion; they shall roar like young lions; yea they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away, and none shall deliver it.

30. And in that day, they shall roar against them, like the roaring of the sea: and if one look upon the land, behold darkness, and sorrow; and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

bling; notwithstanding the watching required for the expedition, they shall not slumber; nor shall any accident retard their march.

28. Their armour shall be full proof, and well handled. Their horses and chariots in strength and firmness fitted for the expedition.

29. In courage and strength they shall resemble the lion, who by his roaring terrifies his enemies, while his own heart is firm. Like him too, they shall be successful in their attack; for as he carries away the prey safely, so they shall seize on the persons, lands, and substance of the Jews, while every attempt to resist them shall prove ineffectual.

30. The tumult of their invasion shall resemble the raging of the sea, in a storm; while the consequences of it shall be, a thorough and long-continued desolation, like that occasioned by the seas overwhelming the land. In a word, the Jewish nation shall not only be humbled and destroyed by their enemies; but their government and polity shall be dissolved.

CHAPTER VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter gives an account of the solemn manner, in which Isaiah was called to the prophetic office*. As the special end of his call was to prophecy concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, he receives a view of the glory of his divine nature, verses 1,--4. for so the apostle John explains this verse, John xii. 41. Being humbled by this view, the best preparation for the work to which he was called, verse 5. he is comforted, then called, verses 6, 8. He receives a message, intimating the obstinacy with which the Jews

* Whether this was his first call, and ought to be prefixed to his prophecy, or only a renewal of it, is a question of no great importance, since the sense of the passage will be the same. Only I would observe, That the order in which the prophets received the several visions has not always

been followed, by those who collected them into one volume. Thus, what is related Jer. xxxiv. the prophet received in the tenth year of Zedekiah, but what is related chap. xxxv. and xxxvi. he received in the days of Jehoiakim, ten or sixteen years before.

would reject the Messiah, when he appeared, verses 9, 10.; for so the passage is applied, Mat. xiii. 14. Mark iv. 12. Luke viii. 10. John xii. 40. Acts xxviii. 26. Rom. xi. 8. He shews that they would persevere in that obstinacy and unbelief, until it would occasion their dispersion by the Romans, verses 11, 12. He intimates their preservation as a separate people, and at length their conversion, verse 13.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. In the last year of the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, I had this vision. I saw the second person of the adorable Trinity, sitting on an elevated throne, intimating his sovereignty in heaven; the lower part of the throne filled the temple, intimating his residence in the church among the Jews. Angels as his attendants stood round the throne, each one of them had six wings; with two of them he covered his face, to shew his reverence. So Elijah hasted, and he covered his face in his mantle. With two he covered his feet, to testify a humble sense of his own imperfection, compared with him who is infinitely perfect, and who chargeth his angels with folly; the remaining two were extended as if he were about to fly, intimating his cheerful prompt obedience, in the service of God.

3, 4, 5. Their occupation was exciting each other to praise God; proclaiming aloud his holiness, his sovereignty, and the manifestation of his glory to the whole earth in due time, though it had been for a season confined to one nation. By the sound of their praise, the posts of the door were moved, and the house was filled with smoke, intimating the presence of the Deity in his church, and the reverence due to him. Struck with this view of his glorious Majesty, I was led to turn my eye inward, and I clearly discerned, and freely confessed my sinfulness by nature and practice; and my obnoxiousness to punishment, as well as the sinfulness of the people among whom I lived; for in the light of the Divine presence, sin admits of no covering. I was likewise sensible of my unworthiness to carry his messages, compared with the seraphims who uttered his praise.

THE TEXT.

1. In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

2. Above stood the seraphims; each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

3. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.

4. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried; and the house was filled with smoke.

5. Then said I, Woe is me; for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

6. Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar.

7. And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.

8. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me.

9. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

10. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

11. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.

12. And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.

13. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten, as a teil-tree, and as an oak;

6, 7. How soon I confessed my sins, I obtained forgiveness, which was signified to me by the declaration of the angel, as well as by a sign, his taking a live coal from the altar, and applying it to my lips; intimating, that a sacrifice should be offered in due time, to expiate the sins of men, by which, when the convinced sinner should have recourse to it by faith, he should obtain forgiveness.

8. At the same time I heard the voice of JEHOVAH who sat on the throne, saying, Who will undertake cheerfully to deliver the message I am about to send? Who will deliver it sincerely, with a single eye to the glory of the Trinity? Upon which, being sensible of the honour of the employment, and a partaker of the Divine mercy, I answered, I will cheerfully undertake it, if thou wilt commission me.

9, 10. And JEHOVAH said, Go, and personate the messengers whom I will send to this people, on the Messiah's appearance; say, what they will have occasion to tell them, "Ye shall hear heavenly doctrine, but ye shall not understand its spiritual meaning; ye shall see miracles, but shall not perceive in them evidences of a Divine power. Your carnal hearts, resisting the truth, shall occasion a judicial hardness: this will prevent the most powerful means from working a saving change in you; so that ye shall not be healed of your spiritual maladies."

11. Then said I, O JEHOVAH, how long shall this judicial hardness continue? To which he answered, Until it occasion severe judgments, particularly the utter desolation of their country.

12. For JEHOVAH shall disperse the inhabitants, into the most distant regions, and the land shall be forsaken of them, for a long period of time.

13. But in this state of dispersion a remnant shall be preserved, of whom shall proceed a people consecrated like the tithe to God. They shall return to the possession of the land, and shall be as

a vine that produceth good grapes ; their conduct shall be acceptable to God. The nation in their dispersion may be fitly compared to the elm or oak tree: though, stripped of their foliage in winter, the sap remains, and with the returning spring it rises and shoots forth fresh leaves. So they, though deprived of their national establishment, and stripped of their spiritual privileges, shall remain a separate people, till the season appointed of God, when they shall be restored to their privileges again; for they are preserved a separate people, on account of the holy offspring which shall one day proceed from them.

whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter contains a message, which God sent by the prophet to Ahaz king of Judah. The kings of Syria and Israel had entered into a confederacy to extirpate the royal family of David, and set up another king over Judah, verse 6. Ahaz was greatly alarmed by these tidings; and not only he, but his people likewise, even the faithful of the land, who looked forward to the great salvation promised through a future descendent of that family, verses 1,—3. Isaiah, for their sakes, is sent to comfort Ahaz, and to assure him, that the counsel of the confederate kings shall not be accomplished, verses 3,—9. Ahaz having no confidence in this message, God commands him to ask a sign, which would prove to his external senses that the message was from God, verses 10, 11. The sign offered, Ahaz declines, lest his acceptance would oblige him to forego an alliance with the king of Assyria, verse 12. Upon this, the prophet sharply reproves the infidelity of Ahaz and his counsellors, verse 13. And then proceeds, in the name of God, to offer two signs, by way of confirming the comfortable message he had delivered. The first is, a promise of the Messiah's birth, which implies in it the existence of the family of David, from which he should proceed, and consequently the nullity of the decree contrived by the confederate kings for extirpating that family, verses 14, 15. The second sign is, an allusion to the prophet's son, Shear-jashub, whom he held in his arms, implying the premature death of the confederate kings; and consequently a deliverance from the present invasion, verse 16. In regard Ahaz relied more on the friendship of Assyria, than the protection of the Deity, the prophet proceeds to point

out the calamitous consequences of that alliance with Assyria; which were afterwards verified, by the invasion of Senacherib, verses 17,—25.

The situation of Ahab, when invaded by the confederate kings, brings several persons into view, either as his allies or enemies, to each of whom the prophet delivers a distinct message, as to the family of David; to Ahaz; to the confederate kings in this chapter; to the Jews, who had no trust in God; to the faithful in the land, chapter viii.; to the ten tribes; and to the king of Assyria, chapters ix. and x. So that it appears to be one continued section of prophecy, from the beginning of this chapter to the close of the tenth.

THE TEXT.

1. And it came to pass in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, king of Judah, that Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, king of Israel, went up toward Jerusalem, to war against it, but could not prevail against it.

2. And it was told the house of David, saying, Syria is confederate with Ephraim, and his heart was moved, and the heart of his people, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.

3. Then said the Lord unto Isaiah, Go forth now to meet Ahaz, thou and Shear-jashub thy son, at the end of the conduit of the upper pool, in the high way of the fullers field.

4. And say unto him, Take heed, and be quiet, fear not, neither be faint-hearted, for the two tails of

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The following prophecy was delivered in the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah king of Judah; upon occasion of an attempt made by Rezin, king of Assyria, and Pekah, king of Israel, to seize upon Jerusalem; in which, however, they failed.

2. When tidings of the intended invasion were brought to the king of Judah and his counsellors, bearing, that the kings of Syria and Israel had entered into a confederacy, to seize upon the kingdom of Judah, and extirpate the royal family of David, Ahaz and his people, who were interested in the preservation of the family of David, were greatly alarmed, and trembled through fear, as the trees of the wood when shaken by the wind.

3, 4. In this perplexity, JEHOVAH sent a message of comfort by the prophet Isaiah, saying, Go and meet Ahaz. Take with you Shear-jashub your son. His terror drives the king hither and thither, but you will find him at the end of the aqueduct of the upper pool, in the high way that leads to the fullers field. Say to him in my name, Beware of sinning in your affliction, by murmuring at heart, or of adopting wholly illegal means of deliverance. Let your confidence be in God, wait patiently for him; take courage, and

let not your heart fail you, on account of the confederate kings. Though they appear to you flaming torches, able to consume whatever opposes them; they may be more fitly compared to the tails of smoking fire-brands, when the substance is spent, and the flame extinguished. Their wrath, though fierce, is impotent, and shall be exhausted in threats never to be accomplished.

5, 6. I know they have resolved on measures which would be very destructive to you, could they accomplish them. They have concerted to come up against Judah, and not only to harass it, the common consequence of war, but likewise to make a breach in the tribe and kingdom of Judah, by destroying the family of David, for the establishment of their own authority; and for this end they have resolved to set up a king, who may be devoted to their interest, the son of Tabeal.

7. But this decree hath the sovereign Ruler pronounced, in whose hands all events are, Their counsel shall not be established, nor shall their schemes be accomplished.

8. Instead of enlarging the boundaries of their kingdoms, as they propose; Rezin shall still be confined to the kingdom Syria, of which the capital is Damascus; and as to the people of Israel, their national establishment shall be done away within sixty-five years*.

9. And until that event takes place, the kingdom, notwithstanding the projects of Remaliah's son, shall be confined to its present boundaries, having Samaria for its capital city. It is necessary to believe this message, in order to be established through the favour of God.

10, 11. JEHOVAH, perceiving the unbelief of Ahaz, in order to remove it, said to him by the prophet, Ask thee a sign from JEHOVAH thy God, as Gideon formerly did, either in the earth or sea below, or in the firmament above, which, when granted to your request, shall prove that the mes-

these smoking fire-brands, for the fierce anger of Rezin with Syria, and of the son of Remaliah.

5. Because Syria, Ephraim, and the son of Remaliah, have taken evil counsel against thee, saying,

6. Let us go up against Judah, and vex it, and make a breach therein for us, and set a king in the midst of it, even the son of Tabeal:

7. Thus saith the Lord God, It shall not stand, neither shall it come to pass.

8. For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within three score and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people.

9. And the head of Ephraim is Samaria, and the head of Samaria is Remaliah's son. If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established.

10. Moreover the Lord spake again unto Ahaz, saying,

11. Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God; ask it either in the depth, or in the height above.

* It was sixty-five years from the beginning of the reign of Ahaz, when this prophecy was delivered, to the total depopulation of the kingdom of Israel by Ezzarhad-

don, who carried away the remains of the ten tribes, which had been left by Tiglath-pileser and Salmaneser.

sage sent you is from God, and that the prophet speaks not of himself.

12. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord.

12. But Ahaz, having no confidence in the divine protection, and being unwilling to renounce his intended alliance with Assyria, answered, I will not ask a sign, for I reverence the Deity, and consider such a request as tempting him *.

13. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David: Is it a small thing with you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?

13. Upon his refusal, the prophet said to the king and his nobles, O ye unworthy descendents of the house of David, Is it a trivial sin in your esteem to resist men carrying the message of God, that ye have proceeded to a more heinous crime, the resisting of God himself, who offered the special interposition of his power for your conviction?

14. Therefore, the Lord himself shall give you a sign, Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

14. Therefore God shall give no sign for your conviction, but he will give a sign which shall ascertain to the faithful in the land, that the counsel of the confederate kings, against the family of David shall not succeed. Hear it with astonishment! A virgin, descended of the family of David, shall, in future times, conceive, without connection with man, and shall bear a son, who may be justly called Immanuel, (God with us); because in truth, he shall be God in a human form.

15. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

15. He shall assume the human nature, with its innocent infirmities, so as to require food; and in infancy he shall be fed with what is usually given children, butter and honey. He shall gradually advance, as other children do, from infancy to maturity, growing in stature and in wisdom, till he acquire a discernment of right and wrong, by lapse of time †.

* Numbers, in every period of the church, are of the same temper with Ahaz here. All formalists are strangers to the communion which the people of God have with him in prayer. The attainment of any intercourse beyond their self-approbation in the performance of the duty, is by them reckoned enthusiasm, and the asking such intercourse, they call tempting God. But however enthusiasts, on the one hand, and formalists, on the other, may confound these two, tempting God, and trusting in him; one observation will distinguish them: to ask what God has promised, is trusting him;

to ask what he has not promised, is tempting him.

† The Jews object to our application of this prophecy, that there appears no connection betwixt it, and the message on which Isaiah was sent; for what consolation (say they) could it afford Ahaz, in his present situation, that the Messiah should be born 500 years after? Certain Christian commentators have fallen in with this idea, so far as to suppose, that the prophet has an immediate view to some child who should be born then, or soon after; yet having a remote view to the Messiah, as

16. Another sign which God gives that the counsel of these kings shall not be accomplished, is, that before this child Shear-jashub* shall arrive at the years of maturity, so as to discern right from wrong, they both shall cease to govern the countries of Syria and Israel, so inimical to you.

17. But though God shall thus preserve the family of David, and deliver you from the threatened invasion, in regard you rely more on the assistance of Assyria, than the protection of JEHOVAH, he will punish you severely. He will bring on the land a judgment so extensive, as to involve all ranks, you, your people, and your father's house. A judgment so great, that no event so humiliating to the kingdom of Judah, has occurred since the revolt of the ten tribes.

18. JEHOVAH, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, shall induce the Egyptians and Assyrians to come up against your land, numerous as swarms of flies or bees.

19. Like those they shall rest in the vallies, deserted by the inhabitants; follow them into the holes of the rocks, whither they have gone to conceal themselves; and seize indiscriminately on all things trivial or valuable.

20. You have hired the Assyrians to assist you, but JEHOVAH shall hire these very persons for another purpose, to make this land as bare of men and their substance, as the human body is of hair when shaved by a razor.

16. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

17. The Lord shall bring upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the king of Assyria.

18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall hiss for the fly that is in the uttermost part of the river of Egypt, and for the bee that is in the land of Assyria.

19. And they shall come, and shall rest all of them in the desolate vallies, and in the holes of the rocks, and upon all thorns, and upon all bushes.

20. In the same day shall the Lord shave with a razor that is hired, namely, by them beyond the river, by the king of Assyria, the head and the hair of the feet, and it shall also consume the beard.

typified by that child. But there is no necessity for any such supposition; the connection of the prophet's discourse appears evidently, when we reflect, that the confederate kings intended to extirpate the family of David. Now the strongest argument for ascertaining the preservation of that family, to those who revered the divine word, was, a renewal of the promise, concerning the birth of the Messiah, who should be a descendent of that family. The more remote the event of his birth, the more fully it ascertained the preservation of the fa-

mily in the mean time. That the confederate kings intended to extirpate the family of David appears, 1st, from their being mentioned once and again, ver. 2. and 13. as having a concern in the message. 2d, From the intention of setting up another king, ver. 6. This, according to the practice of the kings of Israel, implied the extirpation of the family and relations of his predecessor.

* Unless the prophet pointed here to Shear-jashub, to what purpose was he commanded to carry him along?

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a man shall nourish a young cow and two sheep.

22. And it shall come to pass, that for the abundance of milk that they shall give, that he shall eat butter; for butter and honey shall every one eat, that is left in the land.

23. And it shall come to pass in that day, that every place shall be, where there were a thousand vines, at a thousand silverlings, it shall even be for briers and thorns.

24. With arrows and with bows shall men come thither; because all the land shall become briers and thorns.

25. And on all hills that shall be digged with the mattock, there shall not come thither the fear of briers or thorns; but it shall be for the sending forth of oxen, and for the treading of lesser cattle.

21, 22. And the same distrust of God and reliance on man, shall at length bring on the land desolation so great, that many of those who have numerous families, flocks, and herds, shall be left alone*; and their whole stock shall be one cow and two sheep. The fields shall be uncultivated, and produce only pasture; of course there will be abundance of milk, so that the few who remain in the land, may eat butter and wild honey; but in these shall their whole provision consist, instead of corn, wine, and oil, to which they had been accustomed.

23. For vineyards containing a thousand vines, which now let for a thousand pieces of silver, shall be over-run with briers and thorns.

24, 25. Thickets of these shall be so numerous, as to afford shelter for ravenous wild beasts; so that none may enter the land without arms. The hills, on which are choice olive yards, so well cultivated, that there is no fear of briers and thorns, shall produce only pasture, for feeding flocks and herds.

* The desolation here mentioned, to the end of the chapter, was not occasioned by Senacherib's invasion, but by the Babylonish captivity. The prophet was led naturally to mention this last, reprehending the

unbelief of Ahaz, because the same disposition of distrusting God, and relying on human aid in preference, occasioned the captivity.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet continues the subject on which he had entered, in the preceding chapter. He gives another sign, that the confederate kings should be themselves spoiled by the king of Assyria, ver. 1,—4. In regard severals in the kingdom of Judah abetted the scheme of the confederate kings; he threatens them, by intimating

an invasion of Judah, by the king of Assyria, ver. 5,—8. ; a threatening afterwards accomplished by Senacherib. For the consolation of the faithful, he intimates a deliverance from his invasion, triumphing in the certain prospect of his defeat, ver. 9, 10. The obstinacy of Ahaz and his nobles, in rejecting the message which God sent by the prophet, and the miracle by which he offered to prove its authenticity, gives occasion to the spirit of prophecy, to represent the state of the Jews in our Saviour's time ; for they, by a similar spirit of obstinate unbelief, rejected his message, notwithstanding the miracles by which he proved his divine mission. Accordingly the prophet, personating the faithful among the Jews, upon our Saviour's appearance, represents God instructing him not to join in the hopes or fears of the bulk of the nation, ver. 11, 12, 13. promising to such the peculiar privileges of his people, while the bulk of the nation should be deprived of these privileges, and should experience the severest hardships, ver. 14, 15. He represents God promising the faithful the knowledge of his word, ver. 16. and the light of his countenance, ver. 17. when denied the rest ; however they might be exposed to reproaches an account of their Saviour, ver. 18. Exhorting them to quit heathen superstitions, ver. 19. and Jewish traditions, ver. 20. declaring that those who adhered to those traditions, should be involved in the greatest calamities, and deepest delusions, ver. 21. which would end in the final dissolution of their government, ver. 22.

That the latter part of this chapter does, in its proper sense, refer to our Saviour's time, is obvious from the interpretation given of it in the New Testament. Compare ver. 14. and 15. to Mat. xxi. 44. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 8. and ver. 18. with Heb. ii. 18. Besides, the whole of the passage thus applied, admits of an easy, unconstrained interpretation.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. As a further illustration of the message on which JEHOVAH sent me to Ahaz, he commanded me to take a great roll, in order to record and to write in it, with the pen ordinarily used by men, so as to make the circumstances easily read and understood by all, which he was about to deliver concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz,—a son that should be born to me. Accordingly I took two famous witnesses, that number being sufficient for any legal deed, Uriah the high priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah, in whose presence I recorded the name, and declared the cause, that they might prove the name was given before

THE TEXT.

1. Moreover, the Lord said unto me, Take thee a great roll, and write in it with a man's pen, concerning Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

2. And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.

3. And I went unto the prophets; and she conceived, and bare a son; then said the Lord to me, Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz.

4. For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, My father and my mother, the riches of Damascus, and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away, before the king of Assyria.

5. The Lord spake also unto me, saying,

6. Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin, and Remaliah's son.

7. Now, therefore, behold, the Lord bringeth up upon them the waters of the river, strong and many, even the king of Assyria, and all his glory; and he shall come up over all his channels, and go over all his banks.

8. And he shall pass through Judah: he shall overflow and go over; he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings, shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel.

9. Associate yourselves, O ye people, and ye shall be broken in pieces; and give ear, all ye of far countries: gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken

the birth of the child, as well as before the completion of the prophecy couched in it.

3. Afterwards I went to the prophets my wife, and she conceived, and in due time brought forth a son, whom JEHOVAH commanded me to name Maher-shalal-hash-baz, that is, fly to the spoil, haste to the prey.

4. Declaring, that before the child should be able to pronounce, papa, mamma, the words commonly first spoken by children, the two royal cities of the confederate kings, Damascus and Samaria, should be spoiled by the king of Assyria.

5, 6, 7, 8. JEHOVAH gave me another message, concerning such of the people of Judah as joined in the scheme of the confederate kings. That in regard several despised the family of David, and kingdom of Judah, as not affording sufficient scope for their ambition and avarice, being as different, in their apprehension, from other kingdoms, as the waters of Shiloah that go softly, are from the large and rapid rivers of the east; who would therefore submit rather to strangers, for the gratification of their passions, than continue subject to the family of David: Upon such the Lord will bring up the king of Assyria and his army, numerous and fierce, like the waters of the Euphrates, which is deep and rapid. As the river in a swell overflows its banks, and spreads on the land, so his forces shall spread over Judah, seize on every fortified city, that none shall remain to the royal family, but the capital; while parties of his army shall be dispersed for pillage, over all the extent of that land, where Immanuel shall one day be born.

9. But he shall not prevail, so as to take the capital city, or subvert the kingdom of Judah; for the Lord hath shewed me his forces assembling against it, but commanded me to intimate, that they shall be broken in pieces; though they are

from all nations in his army, and well accoutred for the war, they shall be broken in pieces.

10. Though they concert their measures with wisdom, their counsel shall be frustrated; though they speak haughtily, from a certain expectation of victory, their attempts shall be defeated, and that for the sake of Immanuel, who shall one day be born of the family of David, and in the land of Judah.

11, 12, 13. While I meditated on the obstinate unbelief of Ahaz and his counsellors, in rejecting the message which God sent, and the sign by which he offered to prove it; JEHOVAH shewed me, that a similar spirit of unbelief would animate the bulk of the nation, at the time the Messiah should appear, so as to reject the doctrine he shall deliver, notwithstanding the miracles he shall work; but that a few faithful shall be taught of God, as I am now, by the powerful agency of his Spirit, not to join in the sentiments or conduct of their cotemporaries. He will teach them not to seek the favour of the Roman people, nor dread their displeasure †, so as to reject the Messiah; as Ahaz now, for the sake of an alliance with Assyria, and through fear of the confederate kings, has rejected the message of God. He will instruct them to submit to the Messiah, by faith and love, as JEHOVAH the God of hosts, fearing his displeasure only who is able to cast soul and body into hell-fire.

14. To such he will prove a sanctuary, bestowing on them the peculiar privileges of his people; but the generality of the nation, even of the twelve tribes of Israel, not finding his outward appearance suit their carnal expectations, shall reject him, and so bring destruction on themselves. As a blind man stumbles on the block in his way, which he sees not; or as a ship is wrecked on a rock under water; or a wild beast is taken in a snare, where he dreaded no harm.

in pieces; gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces;

10. Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for the Lord is with us, (for the sake of Immanuel *.)

11. For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me, that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying,

12. Say ye not a confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, a confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.

13. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.

14. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houses of Israel; for a gin, and for a snare, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

* The words translated, *God with us*, should have been left untranslated, because it means here a proper name, and a manifest allusion to chap. vii. ver. 14. The prophet shews, that God would spare the family of David and kingdom of Judah, not

only when invaded by the confederate kings, but likewise when invaded by Assyria, for the sake of Immanuel.

† If we let him alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation.

15. And many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

16. Bind up the testimony, seal the law, among my disciples.

17. And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

18. Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs, and for wonders in Israel, from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion.

19. And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that

15. Thus shall the multitude of them stumble; be shipwrecked, and snared, so as not to escape.

16, 17. The Lord commanded me, to bind up and seal the roll, on which I wrote, to intimate, that all his declarations concerning the Messiah, should be a roll bound up and sealed, so as not to be read by the generality of the nation, but to be read and understood by those taught of him. The sin and punishment of the house of Jacob, convinced me, as they will convince the disciples of the Lord, how necessary it is to wait on him with patience and faith, for obtaining light and consolation, when God withdraws the light of his countenance from the generality of the nation; and to look forward to a period, when he shall give the knowledge of the Messiah to the whole nation, so that all Israel shall be saved.

18. JEHOVAH shewed me, that the Messiah should have occasion, in his time, to say of himself and his spiritual children, begotten by the word of truth, as I have now occasion to say of myself and of my natural children, that they are for signs and for wonders in Israel, Heb. ii. 13. For, as I and my children are objects of derision to the profane, but evidences of the truth of the message I deliver to the faithful; so the Messiah himself shall be "for a sign to be spoken against," Luke i. and his spiritual children shall be a spectacle to the world, "the offscouring of all things," 1 Cor. iv. 9,—13. in the esteem of some; but the clearest evidences (on account of the change wrought in them) of the truth of the Messiah's doctrine to others. The profane shall be astonished at them, as persons of peculiar sentiments; the faithful shall admire them, as monuments of divine grace; but all this reproach thrown upon them by the world, is according to the wise appointment of him, who is the ruler of the world, and the protector of the church, Acts iv. 27, 28.

19. Such of them as are called from among the heathen, shall be instructed of God to renounce the divinations practised by their forefathers, and to resist the counsel of their coteremporaries, urging

them to continue in their ancient superstition; for he will convince them, that it is reasonable for men to submit to that God, who is their creator, preserver, and redeemer; while it is unreasonable to serve dead idols, instead of the living God.

20. Such of them as are called from among the Jews, shall be instructed to renounce the tradition of the elders, being taught the things concerning the Messiah, contained in the law and in the prophets, which are abundantly clear, and free from the obscurity of tradition.

21. But the generality of the Jewish nation, not instructed of God, shall pass through the land into captivity, hardened in heart *, and oppressed with outward calamities; so that when deprived of every comfort, they shall inwardly fret against the providence of God, and daringly imprecate the Messiah, who is their God and their King; while (such is their delusion) they shall utter these imprecations in their addresses to heaven †.

22. At that time the land of Judea shall be overwhelmed with temporal trouble, and spiritual blindness; both these shall occasion anguish of heart, and continue to increase, as the dimness of the evening twilight advances to midnight darkness; till at length the government shall be dissolved, and the people dispersed among the nations.

1. For this period of trouble and blindness shall not be exactly similar to any former period of affliction. It shall be trouble without any alleviating circumstances; darkness without a ray of light. Though God formerly debased the land of Zebulun and Naphtali, by the army of Salma-nezer; he afterwards honoured the same country,

peep and that mutter, should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead?

20. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word; it is because there is no light in them.

21. And they shall pass through it, hardly beset, and hungry; and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward.

22. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

1. Nevertheless, the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did

* The word נִקְשָׁה, (*niksha*) may signify hardness of heart, or that of outward condition; in the former sense it is evidently used, Prov. xxviii. 14. Now I think it more probable, that the Spirit of God should describe the state of their mind, as well as their outward condition, rather than use two words merely synonymous, to point out their outward condition only;

besides this hardness accounts for their conduct, in cursing their God and king.

† Words cannot describe the state of the Jews, from the days of our Saviour and downward, more clearly than these; hardened, oppressed, imprecating Jesus, addressing those imprecations to the God of their fathers; who is the self-same person whom they curse.

more grievously afflicted by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

by bestowing on those who returned, the light of the gospel, Mat. iv. 16. Yea, the places that were more especially trampled under foot by the heathen, as Galilee and the region bordering on the lake of Gennefaret, were more peculiarly exalted by the personal ministry of the Messiah; but at this period, they shall be deprived of their spiritual privileges, as well as temporal advantages*.

* As the sense conveyed by the paraphrase, differs widely from that of our English translation, I shall briefly mention my reasons for adopting it.

1. The original admits of the interpretation given; nay I think it is the most obvious on the first perusal of the passage; for the word *bekal* most commonly signifies to make vile, or to debase, *hichbid*, to glorify or make honourable: accordingly Mede has so translated the passage. And,

2. The sense conveyed by our English translation is obscure, if not contradictory; for two periods of calamity are compared, the last is said to be the greatest; but that period is explained in the New Testament to signify the preaching of the gospel. Can the light of the gospel be deemed a great affliction?

3. The Spirit of God in the New Testament, by explaining one part of the passage, throws light on the other. There it is said,

that the light meant by the prophet is the knowledge of the gospel, Mat. iv. 16. that knowledge is said to exalt Capernaum to heaven: of course then the prophet understands by *hichbid* to glorify; and as he states a contrast, by *beklah*, he must signify to debase.

4. From the interpretation of the New Testament I infer likewise, that the darkness mentioned in the close of the preceding chapter, must be the spiritual blindness of the Jews in rejecting the Messiah, accompanied by those troubles which ended in the Roman dispersion:---for that darkness is contrasted with two periods mentioned in the beginning of this chapter; and from the connection it appears, that it is greater in degree, as well as posterior in time, to both. Now the great trouble of the Jewish nation posterior to the personal ministry of the Messiah, must be the Roman dispersion.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet having mentioned the gospel light as preceding the period of darkness, to which he pointed, he here proceeds to describe the extent, ver. 2, 3.; the effects, ver. 3, 4.; the nature, ver. 5.; the source and continuance of this light, ver. 6, 7.

Having concluded his message to the Jews, who abetted the schemes of the confederate kings, he proceeds to point out the sin and punishment of the kingdom of Israel, their allies. In their punishment he mentions several steps or degrees; as an invasion by their neighbours the Syrians and Philistines, ver. 8,—12.; a suspension of government through default of the rulers, with its consequent calamities, ver. 13,—17.; a spirit of division, which would lead

them to devour one another, ver. 18,—21.; a perversion of law for the purposes of oppression, ending in the dissolution of their government, chap. x. ver. 1,—4.

THE PARAPHRASE.

2, 3. Having mentioned the light of the gospel, which precedes the thick darkness, I shall describe it more fully. It shall not only shine on the remotest skirts of the land of Judea, but shall likewise be visible to the heathen nations, who formerly lived in the grossest ignorance of Divine truths; yea it shall have a quickening influence on those who were hitherto dead in trespasses and sins. I adore that wisdom by which thou, O Lord, hast multiplied followers to him, whom the Jewish nation rejected; so that the nation of thy genuine servants is more numerous than at any former period: and that with their number thou hast increased their joy, by the superior light afforded them; they joy in thy presence, as those who reap the harvest of that cultivation bestowed on thy church from the beginning; yea as those who have triumphed over, and divide the spoil of that enemy, who contended with thy people in former ages.

4, 5. For the yoke of Satan, the great oppressor of thy people, which he laid heavily upon them, by the tyranny of their lusts, the gloom of superstition, and the fear of death, thou hast broken from off their neck; and this thou hast effected, by means apparently insufficient for the end; for as thou gavest Gideon a victory over Midian, by a lamp and trumpet; so to thy people over Satan, by the light of thy word and Spirit, announced to the world by preaching. Human warriors obtain a victory, by means calculated to affect the external senses, as a confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be acquired, by means imperceptible to the external senses, the secret but effectual operation of the Spirit,

THE TEXT.

2. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

3. Thou hast multiplied their nation, and not * increased the joy; they joy before thee, according to the joy in harvest; and as men rejoice, when they divide the spoil.

4. For thou hast broken the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian.

5. For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning, and fuel of fire.

* The word **לֹא** not, as in our translation, is rectified in the margin, where we have **לֵךְ** to him; and unless we follow this

reading, it is difficult to avoid making the latter part of the verse contradict the former.

which, like fire *, consumes, cleanses, and assimilates whatever opposes it.

6. For unto us a child is born, unto us son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

6. For this is the reign of the Messiah, who for our sake will assume the human nature, being born of a woman †, as other children are, though he is the co-eternal Son of God, given as a propitiation for us †. He may be justly called Wonderful; for he shall be an object of admiration to men and angels, in his person, offices, actions and sufferings ‖. He may be called Counsellor, for having concerted with the Father, the scheme of redemption in the council of peace §; and because he offers to his followers the most profitable and effectual counsel, for their eternal salvation, by his precepts, example and Spirit. To him pertains the name of the Mighty God ¶; for under the weakness of humanity he retains the power of the Divinity. "Though found in fashion as a man, he will think it no robbery to be equal with God ††." He may be styled the Everlasting Father; for though born in time, his existence was from eternity ††; though made of a woman, he is the Creator of all things ‖‖‖. He may be truly called the Prince of Peace; for the design of his coming into the world is to make peace betwixt an offended God, and guilty sinners §§; to pacify the guilty conscience *; and teach men to live in peace with each other †, by subduing their unruly passions.

7. Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end; upon the throne of David, and

7. His government shall gradually spread over mankind, carrying peace along with it; and in him as a descendant of David, shall be fully verified the promises of continuance to the family of

* Fire is the most powerful of all natural agents known to us; it changes fuel into its own nature; it cleanses metals from dross, though it is interwoven with the very texture of the metal. For these reasons, it is a fit emblem to represent the Divine Spirit. Accordingly he is frequently represented by fire. Thus he that cometh after me, will baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, (or as fire,) Mat. iii. 11. On the day of pentecost, when the apostles received the Spirit, "cloven tongues as of fire sat on each of them," Acts ii. 21. which shews, that Divine wisdom consider-

ed fire to be the fittest representation of his operations.

† Gen. iii. 15. Gal. iv. 4.

† 1 John iv. 10. John iii. 16.

‖ Luke ii. 47. Mat. vii. 28. Mark vii. 37. Luke xxiii. 48. John xx. 12.

§ Zach. vi. 13.

¶ Tit. iii. 16. Rev. i. 8.

†† Phil. ii. 6.

†† Rev. i. 8. John i. 1. Heb. i. 10.

‖‖‖ Col. i. 16.

§§ Rom. v. 1. Col. i. 20, 21, 22.

* John xiv. 27. Heb. ix. 14.

† Eph. ii. 14. Heb. xii. 14.

David; for his government shall never have an end*; directing those who submit to it, to the knowledge and practice of righteousness; and denouncing against those who oppose it, the signal judgments of God. The power and faithfulness of the sovereign Ruler are engaged to give success and establishment to his government, which shall commence from the period of his ascension.

8, 9, 10, 11. To the people of Israel who joined the Syrians in the invasion of Judah, the Lord hath sent a message. He commanded me to remind them, that the threatenings denounced by the former prophets, have been accomplished in their fathers; so they may be assured, the judgments I denounce shall be verified in them and their posterity. But as God punishes consistently with justice, he shewed me their sins, which will occasion their punishment; for the present invasion of their brethren is, but one of many with which they are chargeable. The whole people, particularly the tribe of Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria, the royal city, who take the lead, are chargeable with pride and obstinacy, in resisting the instructions conveyed by the chastisements of God. Though he has caused their houses to be broken down, and the trees of their land to be cut; instead of being humbled under his mighty hand, they despise the judgment, consider it as a matter of course, and, proud of their own power and resources, boast, that they can build more costly houses, and plant more valuable trees. Therefore JEHOVAH shall deprive them of the assistance of Rezin, by raising up enemies to him, who will give him sufficient employment at home.

12. Yea he who has the hearts of all men in his hands, will turn the Syrians, who are now their allies, to be their enemies. They shall invade Israel from the east, while the Philistines shall attack them from the west: and thus Israel shall resemble a flock of kids, surrounded by wolves ready to devour them with open mouth. Yet after this judgment is poured out, his anger

upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it, with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

8. The Lord sent a word unto Jacob, and it hath lighted upon Israel.

9. And all the people shall know, even Ephraim, and the inhabitants of Samaria, that say in the pride and stoutness of heart,

10. The bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewn stones; the sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into cedars.

11. Therefore the Lord shall set up the adversaries of Rezin against him, and join his enemies together;

12. The Syrians before, and the Philistines behind; and they shall devour Israel with open mouth. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

* Heb. x. 13. Psal. lxxxix. 4. 21, 22, 23. 27.

against Israel is not appeased, but his hand is stretched out with the rod of correction, ready to inflict a severer punishment.

13. For the people turneth not unto him that smiteth them, neither do they seek the Lord of hosts.

14. Therefore, the Lord will cut off from Israel head and tail, branch and rush, in one day.

15. The ancient and honourable, he is the head; and the prophet that teacheth lies, he is the tail.

16. For the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed.

17. Therefore, the Lord shall have no joy in their young men, neither shall have mercy on their fatherless and widows: for every one is an hypocrite and an evil doer: and every mouth speaketh folly. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

18. For wickedness burneth as the fire; it shall devour the briers

13, 14, 15. Because the people are not made sensible by the judgment of the hand of God in it, and his end in afflicting them; they are not induced to forsake the sins which occasioned his anger; to return with unfeigned obedience to him from whom they revolted; nor to seek his favour by lively faith and fervent prayer: Therefore, JEHOVAH shall destroy all order in Israel, by taking away a spirit of government from the rulers; and obedience from the people; so that the nation shall resemble an animal without head or tail, lifeless and deformed; or a country universally desolated, in which the tall trees are stripped of their branches, and the bushes that grow under their shade are destroyed. They who ought to be respected on account of their age or station, shall be as contemptible as the vilest and greatest profligates, the false prophets.

16, 17, 18. Because the rulers, civil and ecclesiastical*, who ought to lead the people in the way of righteousness, mislead them by precept and example, so that they are brought to certain destruction: Therefore JEHOVAH shall punish all ranks; nor will the reasons, which sometimes induce him to spare a part, or delay judgment, weigh with him in the present case. He will not spare the young, in expectation they will do better than their fathers; nor will he shew mercy to the widow and fatherless, though commonly they are objects of compassion with him; because every individual of the nation is chargeable with secret hypocrisy, or open profaneness; with doing wickedly, or speaking irreligiously. Yet after this judgment is poured out, the anger of JEHOVAH is not appeased, but his hand is stretched out with the rod of correction, ready to inflict a severer punishment. Accordingly God will permit the wickedness of the human heart to produce its own

* The priests or ecclesiastical rulers seem to be chiefly intended; for in the original it is they that bless, and they that are blessed: now it was a part of the priestly of-

fice, to pronounce a blessing on the people, which constantly accompanied their solemn services.

fruits, by removing the restraints which he commonly lays on it. From this will proceed universal oppression, mutual animosity, and civil discord, which may be fitly compared to a fire, while the people are as briers and thorns to be consumed by it. As fire kindled in a forest abounding with thickets, readily spreads from one to another, till the whole is in a flame; so division shall communicate from one family to another, and from one tribe to another, till the whole kingdom is involved in civil war. As smoke naturally accompanies fire, so ignorance attends division; each throws the blame of the evil on his neighbour, while he is ignorant of the share he has in it himself; and all are inattentive to the provocations given to God.

19. Thus, through the wrath of JEHOVAH, the whole land shall be involved in trouble, while they shall be ignorant of its cause and cure; the people shall be consumed as fuel by fire; no man shall spare his nearest relations.

20, 21. While one party is spoiled, the other party who carries off the spoil is unsatisfied; as if a hungry man should snatch away from others and voraciously devour it, and yet his craving appetite should remain: but the injuries committed and sustained are alike hurtful to the community, which may be fitly compared to the state of the human body, in case of insanity, which sets the members at variance with each other; so that a man shall eat the flesh of his own arm. Thus, Manasseh shall devour Ephraim, and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall endeavour to swallow up Judah: yet after this judgment is poured out, the anger of God against Israel is not appeased, but his hand is stretched out with the rod of correction, to inflict a severer punishment.

and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets of the forest; and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke.

19. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother.

20. And he shall snatch on the right hand, and be hungry; and he shall eat on the left hand, and they shall not be satisfied: they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm.

21. Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; and they together shall be against Judah. For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

CHAPTER X.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE first four verses are a part of the message sent to the ten tribes, and ought to have been annexed to the former chapter.

The rest of the chapter is a prophecy concerning Senacherib's invasion of Judah, and the disaster which befel him there. Ahaz had resolved on an alliance with the king of Assyria, contrary to the counsel of God. The prophet therefore told him, that he and his people should one day be severely punished by the Assyrians on whom they relied, chap. vii. 17,—25. Here he shews the design of God, in sending the king of Assyria against Judah, ver. 5, 6. The great impiety of the king of Assyria, who had nothing less at heart, than to accomplish the end God had in view, ver. 7,—14.; his ignorance, from which his impiety flowed, ver 15.; his punishment, ver. 16,—19. The effects which God's chastisement by his invasion have on the faithful in the land, ver. 20,—23.; an exhortation to the faithful, ver. 24,—27.; a description of the terror occasioned by the progress of Senacherib's army in their march to Jerusalem, with their overthrow, ver. 28,—34.

The spirit of those who persecuted the church has been the same in all ages, and will continue to be so; their punishment has been, and shall be much alike: the end of God in chastening his people, is the same; the course of his Providence is carried on by similar events. Hence it is, that the spirit of prophecy in several passages, has two or more events in view; and forms his expressions, so as to suit these several events. This chapter, from the 5th verse to the close, seems to be one of these passages; for though the invasion of Senacherib be more immediately in view, he has an eye to the desolation brought upon the Jews by the Romans, while only a small remnant who embraced Christianity, turned to God in the way of genuine repentance; so the apostle applies ver. 22, 23. in Rom. ix. ver. 27, 28. and the expressions used by Isaiah, ver. 23. are used by Daniel, chap. ix. ver. 27. where, (by the interpretation of our Lord,) he prophecies of the Romans.

The connection too with the following chapter, which treats of the Messiah, implies, that this has an aspect to the Romans.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Woe unto them
that decree unrighteousness,

1, 2. They have filled up the measure of their iniquity, by promoting wickedness, with the fem-

blance of law. Their judges enact unrighteous laws, while their writers record the oppressive acts those have framed. The tendency of them is, to deprive the people of God of their right, casting them in their suit, because they are poor, and can afford no bribes; plundering the fatherless and widows of their effects, because they are defenceless.

3, 4. With such persons God argues: You have devised and enforced laws to oppress others, but by what device or exertion, will you escape my observation, or avoid the punishment I shall bring upon you, when I make the land of Israel desolate, by the sword of a distant enemy? You have rejected the poor, when they craved your aid to maintain their right; to whom then will you have recourse in your distress? Man cannot, and I will not deliver you. You have plundered widows and the fatherless, to amass wealth, in which you place your glory; but to whom will you leave it? Not to your posterity, as you fondly imagine. It shall become the prey of your enemies, who shall conquer your land, and seize on your effects. Because I am not among the people of Israel, they shall be humbled, among those that are carried away prisoners from their native land, and numbers of them shall fall, among those that are slain in battle. Yet after this judgment is poured out, the anger of God is not appeased, but his hand is stretched out with the rod of correction, to inflict a severer punishment*.

5, 6. Concerning Assyria's king, on whom the people of Judah now rely; the Lord hath said, I have appointed him as my rod, to chastise my people; the distresses occasioned by the king of Assyria and his army, shall be the effects of my just indignation. I have ordained it, and will send him against the Jewish nation, who by their hypocrisy, have provoked me to anger. I will give him a commission, and enable him to fulfil it; to

teous decrees, and that write grievousness, which they have prescribed:

2. To turn aside the needy from judgment, and to take away the right from the poor of my people, that widows may be their prey; and that they may rob the fatherless!

3. And what will ye do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?

4. Without me they shall bow down under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

5. O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation.

6. I will send him against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath: will I give him

* By a severer punishment here, must be meant their continuing in that state of captivity, into which they were carried by Salmanezer; for it is certain they never returned from it.

charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down, like the mire of the streets.

7. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations, and a few.

8. For he saith, Are not my princes altogether kings?

9. Is not Calno as Carchemish? Is not Hamath as Arpad? Is not Samaria as Damascus?

10. As my hand hath found the kingdoms of the idols, and whose graven images did excel them of Jerusalem, and of Samaria;

11. Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria and her idols, so do to Jerusalem and her idols?

12. Wherefore, it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and upon Jerusalem; I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks.

13. For he saith, By the strength of my hand have I done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent, and have removed the bounds of the people, and have robbed their treasures, and I have put down the inhabi-

teize on their effects as a spoil, on their persons as a prey, and to slay multitudes, treading them down as the mire of the streets.

7. However he is not conscious of having received a commission from me, nor has he any thing less at heart, than to do my will. He is influenced only by his own passions. He is stimulated to destroy multitudes, by ambition and covetousness.

8. He saith under the influence of ambition, "How many and how great are the kingdoms, which I have conquered! The princes now subject to me, were altogether independent kings; and each as powerful as the other.

9. The king of Calno is equal to the king of Carchemish; the king of Hamath as powerful as the king of Arpad; the king of Samaria as great as the king of Damascus.

10. As these kings were unable to resist me, so their idols were unable to defend them; yet these gods vanquished by me, were more powerful and famous than those of Samaria and Jerusalem. I have already conquered Samaria and her idols, though under the protection of the same deities with Jerusalem.

11. Shall I not then as easily overcome Jerusalem, as I have taken Samaria; notwithstanding the protection of her idols."

12. Wherefore JEHOVAH is so justly provoked, by his pride and blasphemy, that when he has accomplished his work of reformation on his own people, by chastisement, he says he will punish the haughty language, proud heart, and lofty looks of the king of Assyria.

13. For, under the influence of the same pride and avarice, he saith farther, "I have acquired these conquests by my own superior abilities; by my vigorous efforts, and wise counsels; for I am eminently prudent: I have removed the ancient boundaries of nations, by reducing them to one kingdom under my subjection: I have seized upon their treasures, and appropriated them to my

own use, and subjected their inhabitants by my valour.

14. I seized upon the riches of the nations, with as great ease as a man robs a bird's nest of the eggs; as in seizing on the eggs of a deserted nest, there is not heard a flutter of the wings, nor a chirp, so my power and fame terrified the nations, that while I seized on their effects, they did not dare to resist or complain."

15. Against the sentiments of this proud oppressor, the Almighty reasons: "Is it not absurd to suppose; is it not impossible, in the nature of things, that a workman's tools should act against the will, or without the knowledge of him that operates by them? For instance, Shall the axe boast of its work, independent of him that heweth by it? shall the saw give glory to itself, independent of him that moveth it? shall the rod or the staff, forgetting that it is wood, lift up itself against the will of him whose hand holdeth it? If it is impossible that these things should be, it is equally impossible that the creature should act without the knowledge, or against the will of him who is the sovereign Creator*.

16. Because he thus magnifieth himself, and boasteth of his power and wisdom, defying that God who holdeth him as an instrument in his hand, JEHOVAH, even the sovereign Ruler, shall reduce his army, which may be fitly compared to an overgrown body, by a consumption: he shall kindle a fire under it, like that of the altar under the sacrifice.

* A particular over-ruling providence is here so clearly asserted, that one must believe it, or renounce the authority of scripture; yet I am well aware, that scruples against the doctrine may arise in sincere minds. It may be said, how is such a providence consistent with the liberty of moral agents? It has been answered, that no man feels a restraint upon himself; yet by comparing scripture prophecies already accomplished, with the history of the events foretold, we find that multitudes of men, with various passions, in opposition to God's revealed will, have all contributed to accomplish the scheme his wisdom devised, and his Spirit foretold; from which the rational mind must infer, that they were the tools in his hand, as well as the king of As-

syria, like a valiant man.

14. And my hand hath found as a nest the riches of the people; and as one gathereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all the earth: and there was none that moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.

15. Shall the axe boast against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself, against them that lift it up; or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood.

16. Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of hosts, send among his fat ones leanness; and under his glory, he shall kindle a burning, like the burning of a fire.

syria. How God governs a free agent, so as to accomplish his own will, without infringing on that agent's liberty, is a question which I confess I cannot answer. There are many things in the natural world, of whose existence I am certain, of the manner of their existence I am ignorant. Would to God, that a consciousness of ignorance respecting many truths in morality and religion, would induce men to lay aside rancour of spirit, and the pride of controversy, and excite in us severally, a more ardent desire of arriving at that happy state, where, instead of "seeing in part, and knowing in part, darkly, as through a glass, we shall see face to face, and know as we are known."

17. And the light of Israel shall be for a re, and his holy One for a flame; and it shall burn and devour his thorns and his briars, in one day.

18. And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body; and they shall be, as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

19. And the rest of the trees of his forest shall be few, that a child may write them.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the remnant of Israel, and such as are escaped of the house of Jacob, shall no more again stay upon him that smote them,

17. Without human aid; that God, who is a light to his people Israel to direct them, and their holy One to sanctify them, shall be a fire to consume his enemies, to burn them as briars and thorns, suddenly, in one day.

18. His army, which, on the preceding day, might be compared to a thick forest of tall trees, or a fruitful field covered with luxuriant corn, shall, on the next day, resemble a forest or field consumed by fire; for the Lord shall destroy the bodies of many by death, and take away the spirit and courage of the remainder. They shall be disheartened and disconcerted, as when a standard-bearer fainteth, and the standard falls into the power of the enemy.

19. They that remain after this consumption, shall be as scattered trees, in a forest consumed by fire; so few that a child may number them.

20. At that period *, (in which numbers of the people shall be destroyed by Assyria, and Assyria himself shall in the issue be punished), a few of the people (even of the natural descendants of Jacob), shall learn to put confidence no longer in an arm of flesh, a confidence at all times hurtful to

* Lowth (in his continuation of Patrick on this passage) supposes the expression, "in that day," does not refer to the same time spoken of before, but to some remarkable period, however different. But that supposition I cannot admit, because it appears to me flatly to contradict the prophet's meaning. His design by the expression is, to link together two distinct parts of the same prophecy, by shewing them to be coeval. Thus, for instance, the destruction of the Jews by the king of Assyria, and the punishment of his army by the hand of God, were circumstances that coincided, and both were coeval with the sincere reliance of the faithful in the land upon God, to which they were led by meditating on his providence. As the prophecy has an aspect to the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, it shews, that coeval with that destruction should be the faithful remnant; namely, those who embraced Christianity, and had their faith confirmed, by seeing the predictions of their Saviour verified in that destruction. If with Lowth we suppose the prophecy has a further respect to the conversion and return of the Jews in the latter

days; still the expression shews that event shall be coeval with a signal destruction executed upon Antichrist and his adherents, typified by Assyria. The whole expressions of the prophecy are so happily chosen, as to be applicable without constraint to all these events. The destruction threatened, is called a consumption, without saying of whom; because it is thus applicable, in the literal sense, to the consumption of the Jews by Assyria, and of Assyria by the Light of Israel. In the first event typified by it, it signifies the consumption of the Jews by the Romans; in the second, the consumption of Antichrist by the Light of Israel; in the third, the only circumstance in the narrative, which may seem to prevent the application of the prophecy to these several events, that the consumption decreed shall take place in the land, *i. e.* of Judea; but that circumstance is equally applicable to all the events. It was there Assyria consumed the Jews, and there his army was destroyed; there the Romans slaughtered myriads of the Jewish nation; and there Antichrist and his adherents shall receive their final overthrow.

them ; but to rely in sincerity on JEHOVAH, who deigned to call himself the God of Israel, and designed by all his conduct towards them, to sanctify them.

21. This remnant shall return from the pursuit of created enjoyments, to make choice of an all-sufficient God, as their portion.

22. God said to me, " Though my people Israel be numerous as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them only shall return unto me." Destruction is decreed for the great body of the nation, which shall overtake them as a flood overflowing the land ; but in a consistency with justice.

23. For JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, shall occasion a destruction ; he hath resolved upon it ; it shall take place in the land of Judea, and extend over it.

24. JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, thus counsels his own people : he saith to the remnant that seek him in his ordinances, Be not excessively afraid of the Assyrian, so as to lose confidence in me ; he shall indeed chasten you, and endeavour to detain you in bondage, as Pharaoh detained your fathers in Egypt.

25. But in a very short time *, my indignation against you shall cease, and my anger which I testified by his oppression shall end in his own destruction, and that of his followers.

26. JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, shall destroy him, as certainly as he destroyed the Midianites by the hand of Gideon : and the circumstances of his destruction shall be similar ; for as the kings of Midian, who escaped the slaughter in the field, perished at the rock of Oreb ; so the king of Assyria, after escaping the consumption of his army,

but shall stay upon the Lord, the holy One of Israel, in truth.

21. The remnant shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the mighty God.

22. For though thy people Israel be as the sand of the sea, yet a remnant of them shall return ; the consumption decreed shall overflow with righteousness.

23. For the Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined, in the midst of all the land.

24. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of hosts, O my people that dwellest in Zion, be not afraid of the Assyrian ; he shall smite thee with a rod, and shall lift up his staff against thee, after the manner of Egypt.

25. For yet a very little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction.

26. And the Lord of hosts shall stir up a scourge for him, according to the slaughter of Midian, at the rock of Oreb ; and as his rod was upon the sea, so shall he lift it up, after the manner of Egypt.

* This was literally fulfilled in the case of Assyria. The time that intervened betwixt his invasion and the destruction of his army was very short. But how will it apply to the events typified by it ? The distresses brought on the Jews by the Romans, were long continued ; Antichrist's oppression of the church, is longer still. But let it be remembered, that the oppression of

God's faithful followers is short, compared to the duration of his love, that lasts through eternity. What is time to eternity ? A dream of the night, a twinkling of the eye, a flash of lightning. It was by this comparison that the great apostle was induced to say, " Our light affliction which is but for a moment," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

shall perish in his strong hold. His destruction shall be remarkably sudden and unexpected, like the overthrow of Pharaoh in the red sea.

27. And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing.

27. By his overthrow, the burden of his taxes, and the yoke of his oppression, shall be done away, for the sake of the Messiah*. And when the great enemy of the people of God, typified by him, is finally overthrown, all your national calamities shall have an end. Every yoke of oppression shall be destroyed, in and through the Messiah, to whom ye shall then submit.

28. He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages.

28. In order to convince you, that the prophecy concerning the king of Assyria shall be accomplished, and to enable the faithful to profit by the discovery, God hath shewed me the way by which he shall enter the land, and advance towards Jerusalem, together with the terror spread by his approach, among the several cities. His march is represented to me as distinctly, as if I saw him already advancing. He first comes to Aiath, then passes to Migron; he lays up his carriages at Michmash.

29. They are gone over the passage; they have taken up their lodging at Gebah; Ramah is afraid; Gibeon of Saul is fled.

29. The army passes over the fords, they take up their lodging at Gebah; the inhabitants of Ramah are terrified with the report, those of Gibeon, where Saul dwelt, fly.

30. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth!

30. The inhabitants of Gallim shall cry bitterly, so as to be heard at Laish; how wretched is thy situation, O poor Anathoth!

31. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee.

31. Madmenah is deserted, the inhabitants of Gebim are preparing to fly.

32. As yet shall he remain at Nob that day; he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

32. He shall remain at Nob that day. He shall threaten the place of God's ordinances, the hill of Jerusalem.

* Compare this with chap. viii. ver. 10. There the same overthrow is promised for the sake of Immanuel; so that Immanuel can be no other than the Messiah. It is true, that in the original is the word שֹׁמֵר, oil, not מָשִׁיחַ anointed; but the prophet

might have an eye to Ps. xlv. 7. where the Messiah is described as anointed with oil. The opinion is at least as probable as that founded on the authority of the Septuagint, ("from thy shoulder") as no Hebrew manuscript justifies that translation.

33. But before he approach it, JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, shall lop his branches in a terrible manner; so that he who was great in power, spreading his branches like a green bay-tree, shall appear a naked trunk. His men of stature shall be cut down, his haughty followers shall be humbled.

33. Behold the Lord, the Lord of hosts, shall lop the bough with terror, and the high ones of stature shall be hewn down, and the haughty shall be humbled.

34. God shall cut down his army as a forest of tall trees, hewn down with iron, and scattered on the ground, even as Lebanon is stripped of its goodly cedars, when felled by a mighty one.

34. And he shall cut down the thickets of the forests with iron, and Lebanon shall fall by a mighty one.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter contains a message to the faithful in the land. We may readily suppose, that they were greatly alarmed by the threatenings denounced against their nation, in the messages already delivered. The prophet is therefore commissioned to comfort them, by shewing the coming and kingdom of the MESSIAH, the great consolation of the church in every period, and that which ascertained to the Jews their national existence.

He describes the person of the MESSIAH, ver. 1, 2. his government; the manner of it, ver. 3, 4, 5.; the effects of it in rectifying the disposition, ver. 6, 7, 8, 9.; the extent of it, as comprehending the Gentiles, ver. 9, 10. and restoring the dispersed Jews, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16. The description of the Messiah's person refers to the beginning of the Christian era, that of his government is applicable to every period, from that era downward, but especially to the millennium, which is described in similar expressions by David, Psal. lxxii. ver. 1,—4. The effects of his government on those who submit to it, are the same in all ages; but when the number of Christians is small, compared with the other members of the same society, the change wrought by the gospel will hardly be discerned: hence I apprehend, that ver. 6, 7, 8, 9. point likewise to the millennium. I am confirmed in this opinion, by the reason given for the change wrought, "for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea;" that is, it shall be conspicuous, on account of the extensive propagation of that true religious knowledge which shall produce it. I find similar expressions used chap. lxxv. ver. 25. which refer to that period in which God shall create new heavens and a new earth. The call of the Gentiles, when connected with the restoration of the Jews, (as it is ver. 10, 11. by

peating the phrase, "in that day,") cannot apply to the first propagation of the gospel, but to that period, in which "the fulness of the Jews shall be the riches of the Gentiles," Rom. xi. 12. and the receiving of Israel again, shall be life from the dead," Rom. 15. So that the whole of this chapter, from the 4th verse, is a description of the millennium, nor is it necessary from the connection to suppose, that the Spirit of prophecy has any other event in view.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

2. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.

3. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears;

4. But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the

1. When the family of David, which now resembles a goodly tree with spreading branches, shall be cut down, so that nothing shall remain but the trunk and roots; when they shall be deprived of their greatness, and mingle with the vulgar multitude, as in the days of Jesse, their progenitor, the Messiah shall spring from that family, as a rod from the trunk, or a sucker from the roots; having nothing in his outward appearance to attract the eye, or captivate the carnal heart*.

2. Though his outward appearance shall be thus unpromising, he shall receive the Spirit of JEHOVAH without measure†, to qualify him for being Mediator and Head of the church‡. The Spirit shall endow him with wisdom to contrive, and understanding to discern the fittest measures; with counsel to direct, and power to enforce submission; with a knowledge of men and things, as well as the fear of JEHOVAH in heart and conduct.

3. The same Spirit shall bestow on him, a clear and ready discernment of the fear of God in others, so as to distinguish truly betwixt the sincere and the hypocrite. He shall not judge rashly, according to outward appearances; nor condemn partially, according to the testimony of others.

4. He shall govern with righteousness, the poor that submit to him; and condemn with justice, those that oppose; for the sake of the humble of

* See the parallel passage, Isa. liii. 2. when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.
 † John iii. 34.
 ‡ Eph. v. 23. Col. ii. 10.

the earth *. For he shall subdue the whole earth to his obedience, by the preaching of his word; and by the same word shall he destroy those that oppose him, and in the issue, that wicked one who exalteth himself above all that is called God or is worshipped †.

5. Righteousness in his punishments, faithfulness in his promises, shall be the honour of his person, and the strength of his government ‡.

6, 7, 8. And the effect of it shall be, to subdue the violent passions of men, by which they resemble the wild beasts. Instead of the fierceness, cunning, pride, and malevolence natural to them, he shall implant gentleness, sincerity, humility, and love: so that the subjects of his government, shall live in subjection to their rulers, and in friendship one with another.

9, 10. They shall not invade the right, nor destroy the happiness of each other, throughout the extent of the church; for an extensive, deep and practical knowledge of JEHOVAH shall at that time prevail over all the earth, as the waters cover the depths of the sea. At that period the Messiah shall be proclaimed to all people, as a King to whom they ought to submit; the nations shall seek an interest in him by faith, and the church, his habitation, shall be glorious, by the numbers and the virtues of its members.

11. At that time JEHOVAH shall manifest his power the second time, in the deliverance of his people Israel. As formerly he brought up their fathers out of Egypt, so now he shall restore those

meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips, shall he slay the wicked.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb; and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

7. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.

9. They shall not hurt nor destroy, in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

10. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious.

11. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the

* Bishop Lowth, in his translation of Isaiah, gives it a different turn: He shall work conviction in the meek. But I think our common translation is justified by the following clause, which I consider as an illustration of this clause.

† 2 Thess. ii. 4.

‡ A girdle was worn for strength to the loins, by the traveller and soldier; for ornament, and as a badge of office, by kings.

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from Assyria, and
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sh, and from Elam,
d from Shinar, and
mHamath, and from
e islands of the sea.

12. And he shall set
an ensign for the
tions, and shall as-
emble the outcasts of
rael; and gather to-
gether the dispersed of
dah, from the four
corners of the earth.

13. The envy also of
Ephraim shall depart,
and the adversaries of
Judah shall be cut off;
Ephraim shall not en-
vy Judah, and Judah
shall not vex Eph-
raim.

14. But they shall
ly upon the shoulders
of the Philistines, to-
ward the west; they
shall spoil them of the
east together; they
shall lay their hand
upon Edom and Moab,
and the children of
Ammon shall obey
them.

15. And the Lord
shall utterly destroy
the tongue of the E-
gyptian sea; and with
his mighty wind shall
he shake his hand over
the river, and shall
smite it in the seven
streams, and make men
go over dry-shod.

that remain of their children to their own land,
from the several countries of their disperſion, par-
ticularly from Assyria, from Egypt, from Pathros,
from Cush, from Elam, from Shinar, from Ha-
math, and from the western regions*.

12. And he shall touch the hearts of the nations
among whom they are dispersed, so that they shall
cheerfully give them aid †, to gather together and
restore to their land, the people of Israel and Ju-
dah, from the several regions of the earth, where
they had been outcasts from their privileges, and
dispersed from their land.

13. When restored they shall enjoy happiness,
living in mutual friendship, and destroying their
common enemies. There shall be no intestine
divisions, fomented by mutual jealousies, as for-
merly betwixt the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

14. They shall not be hemmed in on the one
hand, as formerly by the Philistines, who possessed
a part of their land; neither shall they be harass-
ed and spoiled on the other hand, as formerly by
the invasions of Moab, Edom and Ammon.
They shall seize as the eagle on his prey, the pos-
session of their land, and destroy them; and they
shall obtain a complete superiority over the na-
tions that surround them.

15. In order to open a way for their return,
JEHOVAH shall utterly destroy their infidelity ‡, as
formerly he dried up the bay of the Egyptian
sea; and by the powerful agency of his Spirit,
like a mighty wind with which he dried the sea,
shall he remove their several prejudices against
the Messiah, though they are as many and as un-
surmountable to human efforts, as the Nile with
its seven streams is impassable to travellers. But
when removed by the power of God, they shall

* This particular description of the coun-
tries in which they were dispersed, shews,
that the Spirit of prophecy had not their re-
turn from Babylon in view; for then they
came up from one country only.

† Isa. chap. lx. ver. 9, 10, chap. lxvi.

ver. 19, 20. See Key to the Prophecies,
part III. sect. IV.

‡ That the expressions, destroying the sea,
and drying up the river, are to be taken fi-
guratively, not literally, is obvious:

1. From varying the subject of this mira-

go over to the Messiah by faith, cheerfully, without fear of delusion, as their fathers passed dryshod, and without hesitation, through the red sea.

16. Thus the way shall be opened for the restoration of the remnant of his people from their dispersion, and they shall come up from Assyria to possess their own land, under the guidance and protection of God in one body, as formerly Israel came up out of Egypt *.

16. And there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people, which shall be left from Assyria, like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

cle. At one time it is the Egyptian sea, then the river with seven streams, meaning the Nile; in the parallel passage, Rev. xvi. it is the Euphrates. This variation is intended to shew that the change promised shall not be produced in the natural, but in the moral world; and so may be represented by drying up any of the waters mentioned.

2. There is a negative laid on the literal meaning, in the words of the text. The Egyptian sea, and the river Nile, are said to be dried up, and for what purpose? To open a way for the remnant of his people from Assyria; whereas these waters did by no means lie in the way of passengers, from Assyria to Judea. This solecism in geography is wisely introduced to shew, that a change in the natural world is not intended. That the moral change intended by the expressions, is, destroying the infidelity of the Jews, by removing their prejudices, and inducing them to submit to the Messiah by faith, I argue from the following reasons: 1. Unbelief is represented every where as the great cause of the rejection of the Jewish nation, and faith as the change which precedes their restoration to the Divine favour. Thus, because of unbelief they were broken off, Rom. xi. 20. They also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in, ver. 23. All Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob, ver. 26. To the same purpose, 2 Cor. iii. 15, 16, 17. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart: nevertheless, when it (the nation) shall turn unto the Lord, the vail shall be taken away; now the Lord (Jesus Christ) is that Spirit (or true spiritual meaning of the ceremonial law.) Thus their infidelity is represented as a vail, which, upon their turning to God by a genuine repentance, shall be removed, by shewing them that Jesus is the Messiah, and the end of the Mosaic economy. 2. The

passage through the red sea was typical of baptism, 1 Cor. x. 2. Baptism is expressive of regeneration, and so the regeneration of the Jews in the latter days may be fitly compared to the passage of their fathers through the sea. 3. Drying up the Euphrates, Rev. xvi. 12. is explained by another metaphor, chap. xix. 7, 8. the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. How? To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. As the way of the kings of the east was prepared, by drying up the Euphrates, the Lamb's wife is made ready, being arrayed in the righteousness of saints: the two expressions have the same meaning. Now the last expression is an allusion to the parable, Mat. xxii. where our Lord shews the cause of rejecting the Jewish nation, to be the want of the wedding garment. The apostle Paul declares the cause of their rejection to be, that they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth. So that wanting the wedding-garment, and rejecting the righteousness of Christ through unbelief, are one and the same thing. If so, the meaning of being arrayed with the righteousness of saints, is evident from the contrast, being the reverse of the parable: it must signify their receiving Christ by faith; submitting to him as the end of the law for righteousness. But this is offered as an explication of that expression, "Drying up the Euphrates." Hence I infer, that it must convey the meaning of the passage before us; for the expressions are similar, they are spoken of the same persons, and point to the same times; any view to the return from Babylon being absolutely inconsistent with the context.

* This passage intimates, and several others confirm it, That the return of the

Jews from their present dispersion shall be similar to their coming out of Egypt, in many respects; particularly that they shall be trained and disciplined for the same number of years in the wilderness, after their conversion, and previous to their settlement in Judea. See Key to the Prophecies, part III. sect. v. Ver. 11. mentions several countries from which the Jews are assembled: ver. 16. mentions their coming

up from Assyria only. Now it is evident from Ezekiel xxxvii. and other passages, that the Jews shall be collected together, previous to their conversion, and converted in one body. Assyria is pointed out here as the place of rendezvous from whence they come up, after they are disciplined, to possess their own land. See Key to the Prophecies, part III. chap. iv. sect. 3.

CHAPTER XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter contains a hymn of praise, to be sung by the Jews upon their conversion to Christianity, and their re-establishment in their own land; for, 1. The usual expression of the prophet, by which he points out cotemporary events, "In that day," connects it with the close of the preceding chapter. 2. The whole sentiments of the hymn breathe the spirit of Christianity. Bishop Lowth, in his translation of Isaiah, says, "This hymn seems, by its whole tenor, and by many expressions in it, much better calculated for the use of the Christian church, than for the Jewish, in any circumstances, or at any time that can be assigned," that is, during the Mosaic dispensation.

They testify their own thankfulness for mercies received, ver. 1, 2.; they proclaim his praise among the nations, intimating, that they shall carry the gospel to others, for advancing the Messiah's kingdom, and the glory of God in the world, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.

THE TEXT.

1. And in that day, thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.

2. Behold God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. And in that day, O Israel, when thou art converted to the Messiah, and settled in thy land, thou shalt say, "O JEHOVAH, I will praise thee: thou wast angry with me for my infidelity; thine anger, together with my sin, is turned away from me: instead of thy threatenings that lay heavy upon me, and the distresses I experienced, thou comfortest me, by thy promises, and a sense of thy favour. I now see with wonder, that the Messiah is the great God, and my Saviour; I will trust in him, though I was offended in him; I will not be afraid to put confidence in him, though I did reject him; for he is the sovereign Ruler, yea, JEHOVAH the God of my fathers, who will afford me

protection by his Providence, and strength by his grace. He is, and will be, the subject of my song; for though he might have left me under his just judgment, he has shewed me his gracious salvation."

3, 4, 5, 6. And when ye shall enjoy the ordinances of grace, and the influences of the Spirit, like a well-spring of living water, flowing unto eternal life, under the Messiah's government and at the same period just mentioned, ye shall excite one another, saying, Praise JEHOVAH, with your heart and conduct, as with your voice; call upon his name, with the prayer of faith and fervency; declare his dealings with your nation, particularly his converting them, among the people that are yet strangers to him: make known to them, how he hath magnified his wisdom, power and goodness by it. Excite them to praise JEHOVAH, for he hath done things excellent in wisdom and goodness; this work of our conversion shall be known in all the earth. Cry out, and shout for joy, thou that art a member of the church, whether Jew or Gentile; for great is the Holy One of Israel who dwelleth with thee, and bestoweth his presence in thy secret retirements, as in thy public assemblies.

3. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.

4. And in that day shall ye say, Praise the Lord, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted.

5. Sing unto the Lord; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.

6. Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion; for great is the Holy One of Israel, in the midst of thee.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS, and the following chapter down to the 29th verse, contain an entire section of prophecy, which lays before us the downfall of Babylon, and the restoration of the Jews. "The prophecy opens with the command of God to gather together the forces he had destined for the service, ver. 2, 3. Upon which the prophet hears immediately the tumultuous noise of the different nations crowding together to his standard; he sees them advancing, prepared to execute the Divine wrath, ver. 4, 5. He proceeds to describe the dreadful consequences of their visitation; the consternation that will seize those that are objects of it; and transferring unawares the speech from himself to God, ver. 11. sets forth, under a variety of the most striking images, the dreadful destruction of the inhabi-

tants of Babylon, which will follow, ver. 11,—16.; and the everlasting desolation to which that great city is doomed, ver. 17,—22.

The deliverance of Judah from captivity, the immediate consequence of this great revolution, is then set forth, without being much enlarged upon, or greatly amplified, chap. xiv. 1, 2. This introduces with the greatest ease, and the utmost propriety, the triumphant song on that subject, ver. 4,—28. *."

But though the Spirit of prophecy had a view to the destruction of ancient Babylon, and the return of the Jews from thence, there are several circumstances in the description, which cannot apply to that period; and therefore indicate, that he has a further aspect to the destruction of the New Testament Babylon; and the return of the Jews from their present dispersion. 1. Though the expressions, chap. xiii. ver. 3. are in some sense applicable to the army of Cyrus, who were appointed of God, to be the instruments of Babylon's destruction, were made victorious by the power of God, and rejoiced in their own success, the effect of that power; yet, according to their full force, they are only applicable to the destroyers of the New Testament Babylon, who shall be sanctified in heart and life, as well as set apart for that particular service; shall be mighty from a consciousness of Divine assistance, and shall rejoice in the glory arising to God from the success of their expedition. 2. The destruction of Babylon is cotemporary with the restoration of the Jews, as appears from the connection; but the restoration promised, was by no means fully verified in the return from ancient Babylon. The names of Jacob and Israel, chap. xiv. ver. 1. shew, that the twelve tribes are included in the promise, whereas only two returned from ancient Babylon. 3. The strangers are said to be joined to them; but when some of their neighbours assayed such a junction, upon the return from Babylon, they were rejected, Ezra iv. 3. Such as feared God among the Jews, mourned, for the affinity into which some of their brethren had entered with the neighbouring nations, and dissolved it, Ezra ix. 4. Nehemiah, in like manner, separated the mixed multitude from Israel, chap. xiii. ver. 8. upon the principles of the law of Moses. The expressions of the prophet, therefore, must point to the gospel dispensation, by which the middle wall of partition is broken down. 4. The character of the king of Babylon, ver. 13, 14. can suit no power that ever existed, so well as it suits Antichrist, described in similar terms by the apostle, 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. 5. The destruction of Babylon and its king is represented, as a decisive stroke in favour of religion, chap. xiv. ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. and ver. 20, 21, 22. and 25, 26. which the fall of ancient Babylon certainly was not. The prophecy must therefore have an aspect to

* Lowth's translation of Isaiah, notes on the place.

the time of the seventh vial, when there came a great voice out of the temple, in heaven, from the throne, saying, "It is done," Rev. xvi. 17; even when "great Baylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath," Rev. xvi. 19. The Assyrian, ver. 25. is the same with the king of Babylon, ver. 4. he is said to fall in the land of Judea; which is not true of any king of ancient Babylon; the prophecy therefore must intend the king of mystical Babylon. The circumstance of his fall in Judea is obvious from other passages*.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The prophecy concerning Babylon, a tale of woe, which was revealed to Isaiah, the son of Amos, by vision.

2. The manner in which the armies were gathered together against Babylon, was represented to me, in consequence of orders issued. I saw a banner erected on a high mountain, as a signal for collecting troops. I saw close by the banner, persons elevating their voice to others at a distance, and where their voice would not reach, beckoning with the hand, exciting them to come forward, and unite their forces, that they might go up against Babylon, the city where princes resided.

3. At the same time, JEHOVAH said to me, I have appointed these for this service; I will make them invincible and powerful, for the execution of mine anger: They shall rejoice in the success of their expedition, which shall demonstrate my greatness.

4. Immediately after this, I heard a noise like that of a multitude upon the mountains; it resembled the noise, not of small armies, but the tumult of whole kingdoms and great nations gathered together. And JEHOVAH said to me, The Sovereign Ruler is he who mustereth this host for the battle.

5. They come from distant countries, from the remotest regions of the earth; and are the weapons of JEHOVAH's indignation, for the destruction of the whole land of Babylon.

THE TEXT.

1. The burden of Babylon, which Isaiah the son of Amos did see.

2. Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles.

3. I have commanded my sanctified ones, I have also called my mighty ones, for mine anger: even them that rejoice in my highness.

4. The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together. The Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle.

5. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven; even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the whole land.

* See Key to the Prophecies, part III. chap. v. sect. I.

6. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand, it shall come as destruction from the Almighty.

7. Therefore shall all hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt.

8. And they shall be afraid; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth; they shall be amazed one at another; their faces shall be as flames.

9. Behold the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and he shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

10. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof, shall not give their light, the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

11. And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.

12. I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir.

13. Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.

6. Mourn with bitter cries, ye inhabitants of Babylon; for the day which JEHOVAH has appointed for vengeance is near. It shall come, not as an ordinary punishment, but as a complete destruction, inflicted by the Almighty.

7, 8. Therefore the inhabitants of Babylon shall have neither strength, nor courage to resist. They shall be overwhelmed with terror, it shall seize on them suddenly and irresistibly, as her pangs come on a woman that travaileth; it shall deprive them of counsel and exertion, so that they shall look with stupid amazement at one another. Impotent anger, and conscious shame, which commonly occasion a blush on the countenance, shall appear in their faces, of the redness of flames.

9. The day of JEHOVAH's vengeance shall be cruel to the Babylonians, demonstrating his just wrath, and fierce anger. He shall lay their land desolate, and destroy the sinners out of it.

10. The government of Babylon shall be utterly dissolved.

11. And I (saith JEHOVAH) shall punish together with the king of spiritual Babylon his allies, the whole world of idolaters, for their evil, and the wicked opposers of the truth for their iniquity: I will make an end of the proud claims of Antichrist*, and lay low his followers, who were so long terrible to the church of Christ.

12. He shall not be able to recruit his armies; for the golden wedge of Ophir shall not procure one man.

13. I will cast down the governors of Babylon from their authority, and dissolve the allegiance of their subjects, in the day I will execute my just wrath, (saith JEHOVAH, the God of hosts), and my fierce anger.

* Chap. ii. ver. 11. and 17.

14. The followers of the king of Babylon shall be driven from their land, as a roe chased by the hunters; they shall perish, as certainly as the sheep driven to the wilderness, which no man restores. Their allies shall desert them, and return to their own people, they shall flee for their lives to their own land.

15. Destruction by the sword shall come upon those who are found assisting them, and shall follow those who are found in alliance with them to their own land.

16. All the calamities incident to war shall come upon them; their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17. Behold, I who have the hearts of all men in my hand, will stir up the Medes* to attack them, a people more intent on satiating revenge, than gratifying covetousness; for they shall not regard silver, nor receive gold as a ransom for the Babylonians.

18. They shall dash in pieces the young men that oppose, and shall spare neither sex or age†.

19. And Babylon, though it is the capital of a kingdom superior to others, and the most splendid city of that powerful kingdom, shall be destroyed

14. And it shall be as the chased roe, and as a sheep that no man taketh up; they shall every man turn to his own people, and flee every one to his own land.

15. Every one that is found shall be thrust through, and every one that is joined to them shall fall by the sword.

16. Their children also shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished.

17. Behold I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold they shall not delight in it.

18. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces, and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb, their eye shall not spare children.

19. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall

* The Medes being mentioned here, will not prove, that the prophecy is confined to ancient Babylon; for it is customary to give the names of ancient nations, both to the friends and enemies of the church, in the latter days.

† The circumstances here detailed, were actually fulfilled, in the taking of ancient Babylon. The Medes rejected a ransom, because revenge was more powerful in them than covetousness. They destroyed, without regard to sex or age, to gratify their own cruelty: But is it to be supposed that the destroyers of modern Babylon, who are represented as members of the church,

shall be animated by similar motives? Surely not. But their conduct may be similar, though it proceed from very different motives; such as a regard for the glory of God, and for the interests of religion. Thus, when the congregation of Israel received orders to destroy some nations utterly, to cut off every thing that breathed; this command was neither given nor executed to gratify private revenge, but to execute just judgment on a people that would receive no correction, and to prevent the infection of their idolatry from spreading and contaminating the church.

as when God over-
threw Sodom and Go-
morrah.

20. It shall never be
inhabited, neither shall
be dwelt in from
generation to genera-
tion; neither shall the
Arabian pitch tent
there; neither shall
the shepherds make
their fold there:

21. But wild beasts
of the desert shall be
there; and their hou-
ses shall be full of dole-
ful creatures, and owls
shall dwell there, and
satyrs shall dance
there.

22. And the wild
beasts of the island
shall cry in their deso-
late houses, and dra-
gons in their pleasant
palaces, and her time
is near to come, and
her days shall not be
prolonged.

in the issue, with as great an overthrow, as Sodom
and Gomorrah.

20. It shall never be rebuilt, or inhabited
throughout all generations. It shall be so infested
by venomous creatures, that the wandering Arabs,
who are contented to dwell in the wilderness, will
not pitch their tent in it; neither shall the shep-
herds venture to make their fold in it.

21. For the wild beasts that infest the desert,
shall lodge there. Their houses, now so beauti-
ful and stately, shall be full of venomous crea-
tures; owls shall dwell there, and unclean spirits*
shall dance there.

22. The wild beasts, peculiar to marshy places,
shall cry each to the other, in their desolate hou-
ses; and serpents shall hiss in their once pleasant
palaces. The time appointed for her destruction,
though distant by man's reckoning, is near in
God's esteem; with whom a thousand years are as
one day; nor shall it be prolonged one moment be-
yond the period he has appointed.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter, as I have already hinted, begins with an account
of the deliverance of the Jews from captivity, which is coeval
with the fall of Babylon, recorded in the former chapter, ver. 1,—3.
Then follows a triumphant song on the downfall of Babylon and its
king.

“A chorus of Jews is introduced,* expressing their surprise and
astonishment at the sudden downfall of Babylon, and the great reverse
of fortune that had befallen the tyrant, who, like his predecessors,
had oppressed his own, and harassed the neighbouring kingdoms.
These oppressed kingdoms, or their rulers, are represented under the
image of the fir-trees and the cedars of Lebanon, frequently used to
express any thing in the political or religious world, that is super-
eminently great and majestic. The whole earth shouteth for joy,

* The word translated *satyr*, is of doubt-
ful signification. But the parallel passage,
Rev. xviii. ver. 2. establishes the sense of it
here. “Babylon is become the habitation
of devils, and the hold of every foul spi-
rit.”

the cedars of Lebanon utter a severe taunt over the fallen tyrant; and boast their security, now he is no more, ver. 4,—8.

“The scene is immediately changed, and a new set of persons is introduced; the regions of the dead are laid open, and Hades is represented as rousing up the shades of the departed monarchs: they rise from their thrones to meet the king of Babylon at his coming; and insult him on his being reduced to the same low state of impotence and dissolution with themselves, ver. 9,—11.

“The Jews now resume the speech; they address the king of Babylon as the morning star fallen from heaven, as the first in splendour and dignity in the political world, fallen from his high state; they introduce him as uttering the most extravagant vaunts of his power and ambitious designs in his former glory; these are strongly contrasted in the close, with his present low and abject condition, ver. 12,—15.

“Immediately follows a different scene, and most happy image, to diversify the same subject, to give it a new turn and additional force. Certain persons are introduced, who light on the corpse of the king of Babylon, cast out and lying naked on the bare ground, among the common slain, just after the taking of the city; covered with wounds, and so disfigured, that it is some time before they know him. They accost him with the severest taunts, and bitterly reproach him with his destructive ambition, and his cruel usage of the conquered, which have deservedly brought upon him this ignominious treatment, so different from that which those of his rank usually meet with, and which shall cover his posterity with disgrace, ver. 16,—20.

“To complete the whole, God is introduced declaring the fate of Babylon, the utter extirpation of the royal family, and the total desolation of the city; the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of their enemies, confirming the irreversible decree, by the awful sanction of his oath, ver. 21,—27*.”

The sublime imagery of the prophet, we must allow to be well adapted to the subject, when we reflect, that he looks forward to the downfall of mystical Babylon, the destruction of Antichrist, the restoration of the Jews, and the commencement of the millennium; a period so decisive for the true religion, so glorious to the church of Christ, that it never was equalled by any former period, and can only be excelled by the general resurrection, and the last judgment.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. God shall destroy Babylon for the deliverance of his people; for JEHOVAH will yet shew mercy

THE TEXT:

1. For the Lord will have mercy on Jacob, and will yet choose

* Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, notes, p. 89.

Israel, and set them in their own land: and the strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the house of Jacob.

to the seed of Jacob; he will chuse the tribes of Israel for his people, and place them in the land given them by covenant. They shall not, as formerly, be separated from other nations, by distinct laws and privileges; for those nations, who were strangers to the covenant of promise, shall be admitted to an interest in it. Neither shall those nations envy and hate the people of Israel, but shall adhere to them in love, as members of the same church, using together with them the same ordinances.

2. And the people shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land of the Lord, for servants and handmaids; and they shall take them captives, whose captives they were, and they shall rule over their oppressors.

2. And the people among whom they sojourn, shall give their aid in bringing them back to their own land. And when the people of Israel are settled in their land, because the presence of JEHOVAH shall be conspicuous among them, many of other nations shall voluntarily prefer a servile condition in that land, to superior outward advantages in another land. And the people of Israel shall subdue their enemies, who would retain them in bondage; and shall hold their oppressors under subjection.

3. And it shall come to pass, in the day that the Lord shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve,

3, 4, 5. And at that time when JEHOVAH shall give thee, O Israel, rest in thy land, after the sorrows, anxieties, and severe distresses, to which thou wast exposed during thy dispersion, are at an end, thou shalt take up this song, containing things excellent in wisdom, adorned with figurative expressions*, descriptive of the downfall of Antichrist, the king and head of spiritual Babylon; thou shalt say,

4. That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say, How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased!

How astonishing is it! the great oppressor of the church is no more: How contrary to human appearance! Babylon the wealthy, the exactress of gold†, existeth not. JEHOVAH hath taken away from her wicked rulers, the power to persecute; he has destroyed the authority by which they tyrannically governed.

5. The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and the sceptre of the rulers.

* In the earlier ages, wise men affected to deliver their maxims and observations, in a language highly figurative; partly to conceal them from the vulgar eye, and partly to try the sincerity. and increase the respect of those who were wise, in decyphering them. Hence Solomon mentions it as a thing highly desirable, "to understand a proverb, and the interpretation, the words

of the wise, and their dark sayings," Prov. i. 6. and the Psalmist, Psal. xlix. 4. says, "I will incline mine ear to a parable, I will open my dark saying upon the harp."

† To the insatiable avarice of modern Rome, all Europe can bear witness; and travellers assert, that the ornaments of one of her chapels exceed in value the plate of all the crowned heads in Europe.

6. He who persecuted extensively, cruelly, and for ages; he who tyrannized over the souls as well as persons of men, is himself persecuted, and none preventeth his fall.

7. The whole earth is at rest, and enjoys peace since thy fall; all the inhabitants of it sing for joy.

8. Yea the rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, rejoice at thy fall, saying, Since thou art laid low, no human being claims to be superior to that authority wherewith God hath invested us.

9. The noise of thy fall spreads to another world. Hades is in a commotion at the report. Its inhabitants are stirred up to meet thee at thy coming; all the great oppressors of the earth, who died before thee, even the kings of the nations, are raised from their thrones. They shall address thee tauntingly,

10. Art thou, who claimed authority in heaven, earth, and hell, become weak as we? Art thou, who called thyself the vicegerent of God, become like unto us?

11. Thy splendour, and the authority that supported it, are brought down to the grave; they are contemptible as thy body, while the worms are spread under it, and the worms cover it.

12. How art thou fallen from the firmament of thine authority, where, for superior splendour, thou didst resemble the morning star! How art thou deprived of thy power, as a mighty man cast down to the earth, even thou that didst weaken the nations!

13. For thou hast said, in the height of thy greatness, in the pride of thine heart, I will be superior to all, I will raise my authority above rulers*, civil and ecclesiastical, I will sit as teacher† in, and head of the church of God‡.

* Stars, in figurative language, signify sometimes civil rulers, as Rev. vi. ver. 13. compared with ver. 15.: Sometimes ecclesiastical rulers, as Rev. i. 20.: doubtless the Roman pontiff did claim a superiority over both.

† The expression and sense is the same with 2 Thess. ii. 4. "He as God, sitteth in the temple of God." The Jewish teachers sat, when they taught the people.

‡ The mount of the congregation, signifies mount Zion; to remove all doubt, be-

6. He who smote the people in wrath, with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth.

7. The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet; they break forth into singing;

8. Yea the fir-trees rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon, saying, Since thou art laid down, no feller is come up against us.

9. Hell from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming: it stirreth up the dead for thee, even all the chief ones of the earth; it hath raised up from their thrones, all the kings of the nations.

10. All they shall speak and say unto thee, Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?

11. Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and the worms cover thee.

12. How art thou fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13. For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit above

upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north :

14. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds ; I will be like the Most High.

15. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.

16. They that see thee, shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms ?

17. That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof ; that opened not the house of his prisoners ?

18. All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory, every one in his own house ;

19. But thou art

14. I will claim authority in heavenly, as well as earthly things, I shall be equal to the Most High *.

15. Yet thou shalt be deprived of thy power, in this world, and shall receive thy portion with the wicked, in the next †.

16. They that see thy fall shall minutely examine the event, and learn instruction from it, saying, Is this the power, who by his authority made the earth tremble ? who, by his bulls and anathemas, convulsed kingdoms ?

17. Who, by the persecutions he excited, made the world a wilderness, and destroyed cities ? who never released the prisoners, whom his bigotry confined ‡.

18, 19. Thy body is treated with ignominy, after thy death. All the kings of the nations, after their decease, lie in state, and are buried with pomp, each in his own sepulchre ; but thou art

adds, on the sides of the north. In allusion to Psal. xlviii. ver. 2. " Beautiful for situation is mount Zion, on the sides of the north." This circumstance distinguishes mount Zion from Sinai, Ebal, and Gerizim, each of which might be termed, the mount of the congregation. But mount Zion is every where in the prophets, put for the gospel church ; it is therefore of the same import, with sitting in the temple of God, 2 Thess. ii. 4.

* An extravagant claim to an authority equal with the Deity, is every where in scripture, the distinguishing character of Antichrist, Dan. vii. ver. 25. " He shall speak great words against the Most High, and think to change times and laws." And Dan. ii. ver. 36. " And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods." And 2 Thess. ii.

† " Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped, so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Now, as no power ever did exist, we can hardly conceive it possible, that any power

ever will exist, to carry this extravagant claim so high, as the Roman pontiff has done. He not only assumes a power to open and shut the doors of heaven, so as to admit to bliss, or exclude from it ; but he claims authority to add saints to the calendar, by canonization, *i. e.* to be the maker of those gods, whom he commands the church to worship. This is insanity far beyond that of Caius Caligula, who thrust down the statue of a god, and placed himself gravely on the pedestal, to be worshipped. And if superstition had not debased human reason, beneath its common level, all mankind would treat the pope's pretensions, as the Gaul treated Caligula's, who burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter. Again, by dispensations and indulgencies, he takes upon him to alter those laws, that are founded on the unchangeable nature of God, and which God cannot alter, without denying himself.

‡ See Rev. chap. xix. ver. 20. " The beast and false prophet were cast into the lake of fire."

§ The history of the inquisition would be a striking comment on this passage.

denied the honour of a decent burial, like a branch which is allowed to rot above ground; or as the raiment of those slain with the sword, so defiled with blood that none will touch it; or as the carcase of those animals, which none is at the trouble of burying*.

20. Thou shalt not receive an honourable funeral, like other sovereign princes; thy memory shall be treated with abhorrence, after thy fall; because thou hast by tyranny, destroyed the land; by superstition and persecution slain the people subject to thy jurisdiction†. By the ignominy affixed to thy memory, shall be accomplished in thee, that general maxim, The seed of evil doers shall never be renowned‡.

21. God hath commanded to prepare slaughter for his disciples||, and followers; because they have persevered for ages, in the iniquitous system of superstition which their fathers taught; so that they are ripe for judgment. The justice and patience of God can forbear no longer§. They shall not extend their power as formerly; they shall

cast out of thy grave, like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to the stones of the pit, as a carcase trodden under feet.

20. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evil doers shall never be renowned.

21. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers; that they do not rise, nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities.

* This threatening is denounced by Jeremiah, against Jeconiah, king of Judah. "He shall be buried with the burial of an ass; drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem," chap. xxii. ver. 19. It would appear, the prophet has particularly in view, the last of the Antichristian line, who shall fall in Judea, as mentioned below: yet several of the popes have been ignominiously treated after their death, by their successors.

† Popery has not only slaughtered multitudes of the human race, by persecution, as the annals of Europe can testify; but the superstitious doctrines enjoined by it, have a tendency to depopulate the earth, particularly the law of celibacy, which prevents the lawful propagation of the human species, while it leads to child-murder and other atrocious crimes, to save appearances.

‡ Though the expressions of the prophet from the 18th to the 21st verse, may be literally verified in the last of the Antichristian line, yet they appear to me likewise to have a figurative meaning, and to signify, the great abhorrence which the world, then converted to genuine Christianity, will have for the memory of Antichrist, after

his fall; not the memory of the last individual, but of the whole line, and the system supported by them. If an individual body is torn from the grave, or permitted to rot above ground, it indicates a violent detestation of his character and conduct when living; so that we can hardly form a stronger figure, to represent the abhorrence of mankind from the system of popery; when its idolatry, tyranny, and profaneness are laid open, by the unerring Spirit of God.

|| The whole church of Rome calls the pope, father; there is an evident propriety, therefore, in calling the members of the church, his children.

§ God threatens in the law, Exod. xx. 5. to visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and that for the crime of idolatry, which is the distinguishing character of the church of Rome. The justice of this threatening will appear, if we reflect, 1st, That it is confined to temporal judgments; 2d, That the children persevere in the iniquity of their fathers; 3d, That the longer time God exercises patience and forbearance, bestowing the means of instruction, when they prove ineffectual to reclaim sinners, the sin of every succeeding gene-

not have the earth in possession, nor spread their societies over the face of the world *.

22. For I will rise against them, saith the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylon, the name, and remnant, and son, and nephew, saith the Lord.

22. I, saith JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, will exert my power against them, and will utterly destroy them. As I formerly cut off the name of Amalek, from under heaven, and the remnant of the family of Jeroboam from off the earth; so will I cut off the supporters of spiritual Babylon, there shall be none to propagate her faith, in this or any succeeding generation, saith JEHOVAH.

23. I will also make a possession for the uttermost and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, with the Lord of hosts.

23. I will also destroy the city of Antichrist's residence, making it like Babylon, full of pools of water, a fit residence for the bittern. I will utterly carry away its inhabitants and wealth together, sweeping it as with the besom of destruction, saith JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler.

24. The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand;

24. JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, hath sworn, saying, What I have ordained, shall certainly be effected; what I have purposed, shall be established.

25. That I will break the Assyrian in my land, and upon my mountains tread him under foot; then shall his yoke depart from off them, and his burden depart from off their shoulders.

25, 26. I have purposed, that I will finally destroy Antichrist, (in whom the tyranny of the Babylonian and Assyrian kings unite), in the land of Judea; then shall the yoke of his tyranny be broken from off the necks of my people; and the burden of his superstition be removed from off the shoulders of my church. I have purposed at the same time, and in the same place, to destroy all the potentates inimical to religion, that are on earth. My power shall be exerted for the subduing of all nations, that resist the truth †.

26. This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth; and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations.

ration becomes more heinous; and the punishment inflicted on the last, must therefore be most grievous. This sentiment is represented in scripture, by an opposite figure; the wrath of God is compared to a cup of wine, Psal. lxxv. 8. Rev. xvii. 4. which is gradually filled, each succeeding generation adding to the measure. At length, when full, it is poured out wholly on that generation. Hence our Lord says to the Jews of his time, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel,

unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar," Matt. xxiii. 32. 35.

* This must appear, at one glance, much more applicable to the disciples of Antichrist, than to the royal family of Babylon. In fact they possessed the best part of the earth, Europe; and spread their religious societies over the world.

† All the potentates inimical to religion, unite their forces for the support of Antichrist, Rev. xvi. ver. 13.---16. They are, together with him, utterly destroyed at Armageddon, Rev. xix. ver. 17.---20.

27. Doubt not the accomplishment of this prophecy; for JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, has decreed it, and who shall make his decree void? His almighty power shall be exerted to effect his decree, and who can resist it?

27. For the Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall dilate it? and his hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?

CHAPTER XIV. VER. 28,---30.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE remaining verses of this chapter, are supposed commonly to refer to Hezekiah, who smote the Philistines even to Gaza and the borders thereof, 2 Kings xviii. 8.; and who was great-grandson of Uzziah, by whom the Philistines had been subdued before. It is supposed, that the prophet predicts the invasion of Hezekiah, by way of rebuke to the Philistines, for their malicious joy at the death of Uzziah. But if that were the prophet's intention, it is reasonable to suppose, that he would have delivered the message shortly after the death of Uzziah, and not delayed it till the end of the reign of Ahaz, above thirty years later. I am of opinion, that this prophecy points to the latter times, and foretels the subduing of Palestine by the Jews, after their conversion; and so is coeval with their restoration, as well as with the downfall of the king of mystical Babylon in Judea, because all the circumstances are more applicable to that event, than to the conquest of Hezekiah. Thus, the rapidity of their conquests is compared to the darting of a "fiery flying serpent," ver. 29.; an expression similar to that, They shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines to the west, Isa. xi. 14. which undoubtedly refers to the latter times. The first born of the poor fitly represents the Jews converted to Christianity; for the subjects of Christ's kingdom are by way of distinction termed, The poor, Luke vi. 20. When the Jews are numbered among them, they may be called the first born of the poor, "Israel is my son, even my first born," Exod. iv. 22. He is "the elder brother," and his right of primogeniture shall be acknowledged, when he is persuaded by his father's entreaties, to enter into his house, Luke xv. "The army coming up from the north," is more applicable to the converted Jews coming from Assyria, than to the army of Hezekiah. The congratulations of the nations, ver. 32. intimate an event of greater importance, than the conquests of Hezekiah. And that expression, "The Lord hath founded Zion," ver. 32. is exclusively applicable to the conversion and restoration of the Jews; but not at all to the origin of Hezekiah. The joy of the inhabitants of Palestine was occasioned, not so much by the death of Uzziah or any

individual, as by the depressed and afflicted state of the Jewish nation, during the reign of Ahaz. Hence appears the propriety of contrasting the present afflicted state of the nation, with the glory of the same nation in the latter days; the defeats of the fathers, with the victories of their posterity; the joy of the inhabitants of Palestine, in consequence of these defeats, with the consternation of the inhabitants of the same country, in consequence of the victories promised.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

28. In the year that king Ahaz died, was his burden.

28. The following message concerning the inhabitants of Palestine, was received and uttered by the prophet, in the year that Ahaz, king of Judah, died.

29. Rejoice not, thou whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpents root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent.

29. Rejoice not, O inhabitants of Palestine, at the present low condition of the Jewish nation, as if their power to destroy you were subdued; for their descendents of a future generation, shall conquer you more effectually, than their fathers. The conquests of their fathers, may be compared to the bite of a serpent, which occasions pain without killing. They harrassed you, without destroying your existence as a people. Their posterity may be likened to a fiery flying serpent, which swiftly and irresistibly destroys its prey. Their conquests shall make an end of your existence as a people.

30. And the first-born of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant.

30. At that period, the Jewish nation shall be numbered, among the poor in spirit; the subjects of the Prince of Peace; genuine children of their heavenly Father. They shall be reckoned, the first-born among many brethren. They shall enjoy all spiritual advantages, feeding on the bread of life; while their temporal advantages shall be many, and firmly secured to them.

At the same period, I, saith JEHOVAH, will deny you, O inhabitants of Palestine, the spiritual food of which they eat; and they, as instruments in my hand, shall destroy the remnant of your posterity.

31. Howl, O gate; cry, O city: thou whole Palestina art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall

31. So certain is the accomplishment of this oracle, that I hear a howling at your gates, a cry within your cities: O Palestine, thy government is dissolved, thy inhabitants are wholly destroyed. For the Jewish army cometh from the north, even

from Assyria, like a pillar of smoke. There shall not be a straggler among their multitude, each firmly holds his appointed place.

be alone in his appointed times.

32. And when the conquest of Palestine is effected, the nations shall send ambassadors to congratulate them on the event. What answer will the Jews give to these congratulations? They shall say, that JEHOVAH hath not only conquered their enemies, and restored them to their land, but hath laid the foundation of that happy state promised the church: So that from henceforth, his people that are poor in spirit, shall crowd into the church, and find in her a refuge.

32. What shall one then answer the messengers of the nations? That the Lord hath founded Zion, and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

CHAPTER XV.

THE ARGUMENT.

IT is not certain, when the prophecy in this and the following chapter was fulfilled. Some suppose it was accomplished by Salmaneser, others by Senacherib. If the last verse of the xvi. chapter refers to the whole prophecy, and that this prophecy was delivered at the same time with the preceding, it must have been fulfilled by Senacherib. But if I may be allowed to conjecture, I am rather of opinion, that the whole prophecy points to the latter days, and to the persons inhabiting the land of Moab, at the commencement of the millennium. For chapter xvi. is an exhortation to join issue with the true worshippers of God, by offering spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord; and seems rather a description of the kingdom of Christ, upon the restoration of the Jews, than of the government of Hezekiah. The two last verses of the chapter, which refer to an event near the time of uttering the prophecy, may have been added, by a practice common to the prophets, to confirm the faith of the people of God, in the completion of the more remote event: for this reason, chapter xx. seems to have been appended to the prophecy contained in the two preceding chapters.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The prophecy concerning Moab, a tale of woe. The cities of Moab, Ar and Kir, are suddenly and unexpectedly laid waste, and their inhabitants are destroyed.

THE TEXT.

1. The burden of Moab. Because in the night, Ar of Moab is laid waste, and brought to silence; because in

the night, Kir of Moab
is laid waste, and
brought to silence.

2. He is gone up to Ba-
lath, and to Dibon, the
high places, to weep;
Moab shall howl over
Nebo, and over Me-
deba; on all their
heads shall be bald-
ness, and every beard
shall be cut off.

3. In their streets
they shall gird them-
selves with sackcloth;
on the tops of their
houses, and in their
streets, every one shall
howl, weeping abun-
dantly.

4. And Heshbon
shall cry, and Elealeh:
their voice shall be
heard even unto Ja-
haz; therefore the
armed soldiers of Moab
shall cry out, his life
shall be grievous unto
him.

5. My heart shall
cry out for Moab, his
fugitives shall flee unto
Zoar, an heifer of
three years old: for
by the mounting up
of Luhith, with weep-
ing shall they go it up:
for in the way of Ho-
ronaim they shall raise
up a cry of destruc-
tion.

6. For the waters of
Nimrim shall be deso-
late: for the hay is
withered away, the
grass faileth, there is
no green thing.

7. Therefore the a-
bundance they have
gotten, and that which
they have laid up,
shall they carry away
to the brook of the
willows.

2. Moab in this extremity shall have recourse to
his idols for protection; but instead of obtaining
deliverance, he shall mourn over the loss of two
other cities, Nebo and Medeba. The Moabites
shall shew every symptom of deep mourning, in
the actions commonly practised by persons in ex-
cessive grief. The hair of every head and beard
shall be cut off.

3. Some shall appear in their streets girded with
sackcloth, others shall retire to the tops of their
houses, to give vent to their grief in secret; all
that appear in their streets shall cry out bitterly,
and shed tears abundantly.

4, 5. There shall be an universal mourning.
The inhabitants of Heshbon and Elealeh shall cry
out aloud; their cry shall extend and communi-
cate their grief to the inhabitants of Jahaz; they
shall cry with all their force*, as persons in des-
pair: their lives shall be a burden to them. My
heart is affected with grief, for the calamities
which I foresee will come upon Moab; though
their punishment is just, as they are enemies to
the truth, yet humanity must feel. The fugitives
of Moab flee unto Zoar, crying out in their flight
like a heifer of three years old: particularly they
go up the ascent of Luhith weeping, and in the
way of Horonaim raise a cry of destruction, as
persons in absolute despair.

6. In addition to the calamities of war, they
shall experience the distresses of famine: the
drought shall be so great, that the waters of Nim-
rim shall be dried up; the pasture shall wither;
the tender plant shall fail; and the green herb
shall be no more.

7. Yea the wealth they have acquired shall be
taken away, and the substance they have laid up
shall be carried by their enemies to the brook of
the willows.

* See Bishop Lowth's translation of the passage, and his notes.

8, 9. The cry of distress shall encompass all the borders of Moab. The howling of the inhabitants shall extend to Eglaim; and go round to Beer-elim. The waters of Dimon shall be full of blood; for I, (saith JEHOVAH), will bring more calamities upon Dimon: in addition to the sword and famine, I will bring lions upon the fugitives of Moab, and those that are left in the land.

8. For the cry is gone round about the borders of Moab, the howling thereof unto Eglaim, and the howling thereof unto Beer-elim.

9. For the waters of Dimon shall be full of blood; for I will bring more upon Dimon, lions upon him that escapeth of Moab, and upon the remnant of the land.

CHAPTER XVI.

See the ARGUMENT of the preceding CHAPTER.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. O ye Moabites, would ye be delivered from these calamities, I would counsel you to offer spiritual sacrifices to the great Ruler* of the earth. Let all the people of your land associate, with the members of the true church.

2. If ye reject this counsel, the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon, helpless and destitute; as a wandering bird untimely cast out of the nest.

3. Consider your past conduct, practise righteousness, shew mercy to the oppressed, hide them that are outcasts for their righteousness; discover them not that are persecuted for their religion.

THE TEXT.

1. Send ye the lamb to the Ruler of the land, from Sela to the wilderness; unto the mount of the daughter of Zion.

2. For it shall be that as a wandering bird cast out of a nest, so the daughters of Moab shall be at the fords of Arnon.

3. Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noon-day; hide the outcasts, bewray not him that wandereth.

* The translation of Bishop Lowth is, "Will send forth the Son of the Ruler of the land;" but that requires a greater change of the expressions in the original, than is well supported. The common interpretation, according to our translation, is, That the prophet exhorts the Moabites to pay the tribute to the kings of Judah, which they had withdrawn: but it does not appear that the Moabites were tributaries to the kings of Judah; and supposing they were, continuing to pay that tribute would not preserve them from the calamities oc-

casioned by Salmaneser or Sennacherib: so the counsel, taken in that sense, has no propriety; but if it points to the latter days, it has much force. The converted Jews are the instruments in the hand of God to punish the enemies of religion collected together, Rev. xvi. 14. Rev. xix. 11. 20. If therefore the Moabites, (or the people held forth under that name) continue among the enemies of religion, then they must inevitably perish; but if they join the church, they are safe.

4. Let mine outcasts dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler; for the extortioner is at an end, the spoiler ceaseth, the oppressors are consumed out of the land.

5. And in mercy shall the throne be established; he shall sit upon it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hastening righteousness.

6. We have heard of the pride of Moab, (he is very proud) even of his haughtiness, and his pride, and his wrath: but his lies shall not be so.

7. Therefore shall Moab howl, for Moab every one shall howl: for the foundations of Kirharezeth shall ye mourn: Surely they are stricken.

8. For the fields of Heshbon languish, and the vine of Sibmah; the lords of the heathen have broken down the principal plants thereof, they are come even unto Jazer, they

4. Let my people, when thus persecuted*, dwell with thee, Moab; be thou a defence to them from the rage of the spoiler: if so, ye shall reap in due time the reward of the mercy shewed them; but otherwise, ye shall be consumed in the punishment of their enemies, for the extortioner shall come to an end; the spoiler of my people shall cease to exist; all the oppressors of the church shall be consumed out of the earth.

5. And in mercy to mankind shall the throne of the Son of David be established. He shall sit as ruler in the church, to whom it belongs in truth. He is the judge diligently executing judgment upon his enemies, and advancing righteousness in his people †.

6. Their pride will not permit the generality of the nation, to profit by this counsel. Common report charges Moab with pride. It is a true report; he is very proud. Puffed up with a conceit of his superior wisdom, power, and wealth, he fears no evil. He is easily offended, and implacable when offended. He is crafty and deceitful, but his crafty devices shall not prosper; they shall neither give effect to his wrath against others, nor prove a defence to himself ‡.

7. All the Moabites shall howl, one half of them shall howl to another, without being able to afford mutual relief; for the men || of Kirharezeth shall ye mourn, they also are stricken.

8. The Moabites may be fully compared to the fields of Heshbon, once covered with luxuriant corn, now blasted with drought, or to the vine of Sibmah, formerly spreading its goodly branches to Jazer, the extremity of the land, yea stretching beyond it to the wilderness, extending its

* Here is another evidence, that the prophet has the latter times in view; for it appears, that a period of persecution and delusion, dangerous to the people of God, precedes the deliverance obtained for the church, by the battle of Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 13, 14. 16. See Key to the Prophecies, part III. chap. iv. sect. 2.

† The connection betwixt this and the preceding verse, as well as several expressions in both, afford a further proof that

the prophet has the latter times in view. For it is then Antichrist, the great extortioner and spoiler of the church falls, Rev. xix. 20. It is then the kingdom of Christ is established and extended over the world, Dan. xii. 14. 26, 27.

Christ rules in reality the church, an office Antichrist has usurped: Christ rules in mercy, Antichrist governs in tyranny.

‡ See Jer. xlviii. 30.

|| See Jer. xxxviii. 31.

boughs over the sea * ; but now the principal shoots are broken down, by the rulers of the nations †.

9. Therefore, with bitter lamentations, like the weeping of Jazer ‡, will I bewail the destruction of the Moabites ; I will shed abundance of tears for thee, O Heshbon, and for thee, Elealeh ; for the enemy have fallen with a shout upon thy harvest, and on thy summer fruits ||, and thus shall Moab mourn when the event is fulfilled.

10. The joy of the Moabites for the produce of their fields, and the fruits of their vineyards, shall cease : the reapers shall not sing, nor the treaders of the grapes shout as they were wont to do ; for there shall be no harvest or vintage, the enemy shall carry away or destroy all.

11. I have a strong impression on my mind, of the bitter grief which the Moabites shall feel, for the desolation of their land, and the destruction of Kirharezsh, their capital city : my heart is sunk into a settled melancholy, so that I am ready to cry out with anguish for every occurrence : like a harp § which readily sounds by a touch of the player's fingers. Such shall be their feelings when this prophecy is accomplished.

12. In this extremity the Moabites shall have recourse to their idols, offering ardent supplications for deliverance, and when they despair of obtaining it from one, they will have recourse to another ; but as their prayers are not directed to the true God, they shall not prevail.

wandered through the wilderness. Her branches are stretched out, they are gone over the sea.

9. Therefore I will bewail with the weeping of Jazer, the vine of Sibmah ; I will water thee with my tears, O Heshbon and Elealeh. For the shouting for thy summer fruits, and for thy harvest, is fallen.

10. And gladness is taken away, and joy, out of the plentiful field ; and in the vineyards there shall be no more singing, neither shall there be shouting ; the treaders shall tread out no wine in their presses ; I have made their vintage-shouting to cease.

11. Wherefore, my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kirharezsh.

12. And it shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high place, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray, but he shall not prevail.

* See Ps. lxxx. where the same figure is introduced, to describe the prosperity of the Jewish nation, and that as a contrast to the state the Psalmist at the time deploras.

† This term may fully apply to the members of the church at the millennium, in Dan. vii.

‡ The weeping of Jazer was most likely a proverbial expression among the Moabites, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon among the Jews.

|| See the parallel passage, Jer. xlviii. 32.

§ Much of the bitterness of affliction arises from the tone of the mind. An irritability of temper feels anguish from occurrences that would have no influence on persons of a different disposition. This irritability may be compared to a harp, or other musical instrument, which sounds loudly for a gentle stroke. It is frequently the effect of pride, as in the case of Moab. A just God has made our own passions our most vehement tormentors, to convince us of the necessity of subduing them.

13. This is the word that the Lord hath spoken concerning Moab since that time.

13. The foregoing prophecy JEHOVAH hath spoken concerning Moab some time ago ; and by way of assuring his people that it shall be fulfilled in the time appointed, he hath now uttered another prophecy to be accomplished speedily. It is this :

14. But now the Lord hath spoken, saying, Within three years, as the years of an hireling, and the glory of Moab shall be contemned, with all that great multitude, and the remnant shall be very small and feeble.

14. Within three years, computed as exactly as by the hireling who longs to receive his wages on the day it falls due, shall Moab, now honourable in the esteem of the nations, be brought to contempt ; their multitude, now great, shall be reduced ; and those that remain of them shall be few in number, and feeble in person.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THOUGH this prophecy is called the burden of Damascus, it includes an account of the kingdom of Israel, which was confederate with Syria, in the invasion of Judah.

The prophet foreshews the desolation of Damascus, 1,—3. which was accomplished by Tiglathpilezer, 2 Kings xvi. 19. He intimates the captivity of the ten tribes, 4, 5. fulfilled by Salmanezer, 2 Kings xvii. 6. That a remnant of them should be preserved, 7,—8. The cause of this judgment, 9, 10, 11.

The remaining three verses are commonly applied to the destruction of Senacherib's army ; but perhaps they have an aspect to the destruction of the enemies of the church at Armageddon, immediately before the commencement of the millennium : 1. Because it is customary with the prophets, when they mention any grievous calamity, to say something of the happy issue of that calamity, however long its continuance ; now it is certain, the ten tribes were not hitherto restored, but it is evident from the prophecies, they shall be restored, together with the two tribes, before the millennium. This may have led the prophet to mention the destruction of the enemies of religion coeval with that period. 2. The circumstances of the description in their full sense, agree best to the last period. Senacherib had persons of several nations in his army : but before the millennium, the kings of the earth and their armies are gathered together, Rev. xvi. Senacherib's army received a singular defeat, yet the remains of it went back to Assyria ; but at the last period, the enemies of religion are utterly discomfited, they are chased away as

chaff. This is the expression of Daniel, chap. ii. 25. describing the same time, "Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, the gold, broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away."

Senacherib himself escaped notwithstanding the destruction of his army; but at the last period, the Antichristian power, a system which had prevailed 1000 years and upwards in the church, shall cease to exist.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The prophecy concerning Damascus, a tale of woe. The inhabitants of Damascus shall be carried away into captivity; and the city shall be reduced into a ruinous heap.

2. The cities likewise of Aroer* shall be deprived of their inhabitants; they shall be so thoroughly deserted, that the streets shall be covered over with grass, where flocks may feed and lie down, without annoyance from passengers.

3. The ten tribes of Israel who rely upon Syria for protection, shall be deprived of their defence, the kingdom of Damascus shall come to an end. And the remaining glory of the Syrians, like that of the children of Israel, shall gradually decline, till they are wholly done away, saith JEHOVAH the sovereign Ruler.

4. For about that time, the glory of the children of Israel shall decline, that people, who may be fully compared to a person wanton with ease and overgrown with fatness†, shall be made lean as by a consumption.

THE TEXT.

1. The burden of Damascus. Behold Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap.

2. The cities of Aroer are forsaken; they shall be for flocks which shall lie down, and none shall make them afraid.

3. The fortrefs shall cease from Ephraim, and the kingdom from Damascus, and the remnant of Syria. They shall be as the glory of the children of Israel, saith the Lord of hosts.

4. And in that day it shall come to pass that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean.

* The Septuagint render Aroer *αις τοις αιωνις* for ever. Bishop Lowth supposes they read ערער instead of ערער, and adopts it as a correction of the present Hebrew text. It must be allowed their authority is respectable, and the alteration probable; yet I prefer our common translation, and the present Hebrew text; because there is no necessity (as Bishop Lowth seems to think) of taking Aroer for a part of the kingdom of Syria; it was doubtless a part of the kingdom of Israel: nor is there any greater impropriety in mentioning Aroer immediately after Damascus here, than in mentioning Damascus immediately after

Ephraim, in the next verse. The prophet pronounced the punishment of Syria and Israel with one breath; because their confederacy against Judah provoked God, to inflict the punishment threatened: and the first part of it, namely, the desolation of Damascus and the cities of Aroer, was inflicted by the same person, much about the same time. See 2 Kings xv. 29. and 2 Kings xvi. 9.

† The figure is taken from Moses, Deut. xxxii. 15. "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked, thou art waxed fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook the God that made him, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation."

5. And it shall be, when the harvestman gathereth the corn, and reapeth the ears with his arm; and it shall be, as he that gathereth ears in the valley of Rephaim.

6. Yet gleanings grapes shall be left in it, as the shaking of an olive tree, two or three berries on the top of the uppermost bough, four or five in the outmost fruitful branches thereof, saith the Lord God of Israel.

7. At that day, shall a man look to his Maker, and his eyes shall have respect to the holy One of Israel.

8. And he shall not look to the altars, the work of his hands, neither shall respect that which his fingers have made, either the groves, or the images.

9. In that day shall his strong cities be as a forsaken bough, and an uppermost branch which they left, because of the children of Israel; and there shall be desolation.

10. Because thou hast forgotten the God of thy salvation, and hast not been mindful of the rock of thy strength;

5. So great shall be the consumption of the inhabitants, by sword and captivity, that the land of Israel, now like the valley of Rephaim, covered with a luxuriant crop, shall then resemble the same valley, after the reapers sickle has cut down the corn, after the husbandman has gathered it in, yea after the gleaners are gone over it, so that scarce an ear is left in it.

6. Yet as a few grapes are left on the vine, and may be gleaned after the vintage; or as two or three berries remain upon the olive, after the main crop is taken away: so a very few of the children of Israel shall be preserved a separate people, when the main body of the nation is either destroyed, or blended with the other nations of the world*, saith JEHOVAH the God of Israel.

7. At the time, that the bulk of the nation shall be carried away into captivity, the few that remain shall by faith rely on, and with reverence worship JEHOVAH, the creator of all, and the preserver of his people Israel.

8. They shall not rely on idols, or worship images of any kind; considering them as human inventions, which cannot profit them.

9. At that time the fortified cities of Israel, deprived of their inhabitants, shall resemble the uppermost branches of a tree stripped of their leaves and withered; presenting a melancholy spectacle from afar; for they shall be forsaken by the Israelites, as much as they were formerly by the Amorites and the Hivites†, ejected to make room for the children of Israel; the desolation shall be universal.

10. The reason of this desolation is, that thou, O Israel, hast forgotten thy God; who gave thee so many and such great deliverances before, and hast been unmindful of his worship and service,

* Some of the ten tribes remained after the captivity of Salmanezer, and even after that of Esarhaddon, 2 Chron. xxx. 10. 2 Chron. xxxv. 18. And some of them are still extant, under the common name of Jews.

† So the Septuagint read the passage, and though the Amorites and Hivites are not

expressed in the Hebrew text, yet the whole verse attentively considered suggests the idea. It runs literally thus, "The fortified cities shall be forsaken boughs, as they were forsaken, from before the children of Israel."

in whose power and faithfulness thy strength consisted; therefore shall your labour to secure the corn and fruits of your land prove ineffectual; though you plant choice vines, and set foreign slips.

11. Though you diligently use every mean to perfect their growth, in expectation of a good and plentiful vintage; though you use the same diligence in cultivating your soil, and sowing your seed, in expectation of a luxuriant crop: yet the time you ought to reap the benefit of your labour, the produce of your soil and the fruits of your vineyards, shall be gathered together by your enemies, to carry them off, or destroy them. The day in which you expected to rejoice, shall be to you a day of grief, and of hopeless sorrow.

But your sorrow shall not be endless. You shall at length be restored to the favour of God, and the possession of your land. At that time many nations shall oppose your resettlement. Concerning them, God has commanded me to say,

12. Wo to the multitude of many people and of different nations, that gather together with tumult and boasting, like the noise of the sea in a storm; that rush with impetuosity to the war, like the rapid current of mighty waters*.

13. The nations shall rush, with impetuosity to the war; like the rapid current of mighty waters: But the king and head of the church† shall rebuke them, and they shall be utterly discomfited. Their power and glory shall be done away, as easily and effectually, as chaff is chased by the wind, when the corn is fanned; or as any light substance is carried away by the whirlwind.

* Compare with this description, other parallel passages; as Isa. xli. 6, 7. "They helped every one his neighbour, and every one said to his brother, be of good courage; so the carpenter encouraged the gold-smith, and he that smootheneth with the hammer, him that smote the anvil." Joel iii. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. "Proclaim ye this among the gentiles; prepare war, wake up the mighty

therefore shalt thou plant pleasant plants, and shalt set it with strange slips.

11. In the day shalt thou make thy plant to grow, and in the morning shalt thou make thy seed to flourish: but the harvest shall be an heap in the day of grief, and of desperate sorrow.

12. Wo to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the sea, and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters.

13. The nations shall rush, like the rushing of many waters; but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing, before the whirlwind.

men, let all the men of war draw near, let them come up; beat your plow-shares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears. Let the weak say, I am strong. Assemble yourselves, and come all ye heathen. Let the heathen be awakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat."

† See Rev. xix. 11. to close.

14. And behold, at the evening tide trouble, and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us,

14. And behold Antichrist who cruelly oppressed the church, for a long day, shall in the evening of that day experience trouble; and before the morning of that Sabbath of rest promised the church, he shall not exist. Together with him, shall all the enemies of the church, who rob and spoil the people of God, perish.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

IT is universally acknowledged, that this chapter is among the darkest passages of the prophet Isaiah. Interpreters allow, that every thing respecting the literal meaning of this prophecy, is matter of conjecture. I shall therefore hazard conjectures, as to the time of the completion, the persons in view, and the message sent to them.

The time seems to be that of the conversion and restoration of the Jews. I infer this from the seventh verse. The expression "in that time," I consider as a chronological note appended to the prophecy, to point at the period, in which the events mentioned shall be accomplished. The people who are said to be "brought as a present to the Lord of hosts," are the Jews, for reasons to be after mentioned. Bringing them as a present or offering, signifies their conversion and restoration, as appears from chap. lxvi. 20. "And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations to my holy mountain, Jerusalem, saith the Lord; as the children of Israel bring an offering, in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord." The prophecy shall be accomplished therefore at the period of their conversion and restoration.

The same is the period of Antichrist's final fall, for he gathers together the Kings of the earth and their armies to resist the converted Jews, Rev. xvi. 16. Among the forces mustered by him on that occasion, are mentioned the Egyptians, Ethiopians, and Lybians, Daniel xi. 4. To the country of either, the description of the land from which the messengers are sent, is in some measure applicable; if by Cush, we understand Arabia, the land beyond it must be Egypt or Ethiopia; if by Cush we understand Ethiopia, the word translated *beyond*, may signify this side or the further side, and the land meant may be Egypt or Lybia. "The land shadowing with wings," is properly translated by Bishop Lowth, "The land of the winged cymbal." Now the instrument of music so called was peculiar to the Egyptians; they too used boats made of the reed papyrus. So

that all things considered, we may infer Egypt was the land from which the messengers were sent.

It appears to me, that the Jews are the people to whom the messengers are sent. 1. Because the Almighty declares himself to be peculiarly interested in their welfare, and executes signal vengeance on their enemies, ver. 3,—6. This too implies that the messengers are sent, not to make peace, as some interpreters have imagined, but to carry on war. 2. Because the character given of the people to whom the messengers are sent, is peculiarly applicable to the Jews, especially from the period of their dispersion downward. They “were scattered,” or dragged out of their own land by the Romans; “peeled,” or fleeced as we say commonly, that is grievously oppressed, and injuriously deprived of their substance; “terrible from their beginning hitherto,” that is, to the period of their conversion by the signal interpositions of divine providence, both in protecting and chastening them; “a nation meted out and trodden down,” or as it is in the original, “a nation of line line,” which may be of the same import with the expressions used, chapter xxxviii. ver. 10. and 18. “The word of the Lord was unto them line upon line,” intimating the various means used for their instruction. Or it may signify, people devoted to severe chastisements, as 2 Kings, xxi. 13. “I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria,” Isa. xxxiv. 11. “He shall stretch out on it the line of confusion.”—“Trodden under foot,” that is harrassed and despised; “whose land the rivers have spoiled,” if taken figuratively is most applicable to Judea. Senacherib’s invasion is compared to an overflowing river, Isa. viii. 8. and from that period, it has been repeatedly overflowed, by the Babylonians, Persians, Grecians, Romans, Saracens and Turks.

The translation of this passage, by Bishop Lowth, however ingenious, appears to me far fetched, at least not so obvious as that of our common translation. Though it were equally obvious, yet it involves the passage in obscurity, by supposing the Egyptians to send the messengers through Egypt. This takes away the connection betwixt the message and the threatening immediately denounced against the messengers.

The message on which they are sent is, to excite the Egyptians to carry on war against the converted Jews, by assisting Antichrist and his adherents. This occasions a threatening, intimating the failure of the expedition, and the destruction of their army, ver. 3,—6. which is followed by the restoration of the Jews, to the land of Judea, and to the privileges of church members.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. I denounce vengeance against Egypt, the country where they use the winged cymbal, which

THE TEXT.

1. Woe to the land shadowing with wings (of the winged cym-

al) which is beyond
on this side) the rivers
of Ethiopia.

2. That sendeth am-
bassadors by the sea,
even in bulrushes (pa-
pyrus) upon the wa-
ters, saying, Go ye
swift messengers to a
nation scattered and
beheld, to a people ter-
rible from their begin-
ning hitherto; a na-
tion meted out and
trodden down, whose
land the rivers have
spoiled.

3. All ye inhabitants
of the world, and
dwellers on the earth,
see ye, when he lifteth
up an ensign on the
mountains; and when
he bloweth a trumpet,
hear ye.

4. For so the Lord
said unto me, I will
take my rest, and I
will consider in my
dwelling place, like a
clear heat upon herbs,
and like a cloud of dew
in the heat of harvest.

5. For afore the har-
vest when the bud is
perfect, and the four
grape is ripening in
the flower; he shall
both cut off the sprigs
with pruning hooks,
and take away and cut
down the branches.

6. They shall be left
together unto the fowls
of the mountains, and to
the beasts of the earth:
and the fowls shall
summer upon them,
and all the beasts of
the earth shall winter
upon them.

7. In that time shall
the present be brought
unto the Lord of hosts,
of a people scattered

lies on both sides the river that runs from Ethio-
pia: Because they send their troops by sea in ships
of war, (though they shall prove as insignificant
as the vessels of papyrus commonly used by their
ambassadors), saying, Go speedily, execute our
commands against the Jewish nation. Be assured
of success, for ye go against a people long disper-
sed from their native land, oppressed in every
country they inhabited; objects of terror for the
chastisements inflicted on them; a nation devoted
to destruction, despised by all people, whose land
has been the constant prey of repeated invaders.

3. In answer to this proud message the Almighty
proclaimed, Know, all ye inhabitants of the world,
that it belongs to me to erect the standard of war,
successfully; understand, all ye that dwell on the
earth, that it pertains to me to found the trum-
pet of war, so as to assure of victory.

4. Instead of the success which they promise
themselves, JEHOVAH spake to me thus, concern-
ing their intended expedition. I will rest for
some time, without interposing for the deliverance
of my peculiar people. I will regard the counsels
of their enemies in heaven, my dwelling place, as if
I would prosper them. My presence with their
first efforts shall be like a clear heat after rain,
which advances vegetation rapidly; or as a
cloud of dew in the heat of harvest, which increas-
es the size of the grape.

5, 6. But when their counsels are ripe for exe-
cution, I will overturn them, as if a man before the
harvest, when the bud was perfect and the blos-
som was become a swelling grape, should cut off
the branches of the vine with pruning hooks,
and scatter them to be devoured by the fowls of
heaven and the beasts of the earth: Thus, at the
time they promise themselves success, I will de-
stroy their armies, and give their carcases to be
meat to the birds of the air, and to the wild beasts
of the field.

7. At that period the people who were long dis-
persed from their native land, oppressed in every
country they inhabited, objects of terror for the

chastisements inflicted on them ; a nation devoted to punishment, despised by all people, whose land was the constant prey of repeated invaders, shall be introduced into the church, and restored into their land.

and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto : a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the Lord of hosts, the mount Zion.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE most approved interpreters refer the completion of the prophecy contained in this chapter, so far as it threatens punishment, to Senacherib's invasion, or Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Egypt. But even these interpreters allow, that the latter part of the chapter points to the gospel times ; and they suppose it was fulfilled in the converts made to Christianity, about the beginning of the Christian æra.

But in this account of the matter, I apprehend there is a two-fold error.

First, The period of the gospel dispensation intended in the prophecy, is antedated ; because the circumstances mentioned will by no means apply, in their full and proper meaning, to the first ages of Christianity, nor indeed to any period already past ; for ver. 24, 25. intimate, that Israel shall be joined in the same faith, love and worship, with Egypt and Assyria : now the union of the Jews and Gentiles in the church of Christ, is a constant criterion of the millennium. To that period therefore, the prophecy in the latter part of the chapter refers.

A second error of the interpreters mentioned is, that they separate the former part of the chapter from the latter, by a long period of time ; in making the former refer to the time of Senacherib or Nebuchadnezzar, and the latter to the beginning of the Christian æra ; whereas the prophet has closely connected them, by the expression "*in that day*," which is repeated no less than five times.

It appears to me, that the spirit of prophecy points out the state of Egypt, in the period immediately preceding the millennium ; and concludes with an account of their happiness during the millennium. They are represented as being much addicted to idolatry, which provokes God to give them up to the dominion of a cruel Lord ; meaning (I presume) Antichrist, or the blasphemous king, who is said to have power over the treasures of gold and silver, and over

the precious things of Egypt, Dan. xi. 43. By his tyranny, every source of wealth and power in Egypt is dried up, while the Egyptians are incapable of making resistance, because of the influence of superstition, ver. 1,—16. In the mean time, Antichrist is overthrown in Judea, in the battle of Armageddon; the tidings of his overthrow trouble his party in Egypt, ver. 17. Then the Egyptians receive the knowledge of the Saviour, submit to him, are made members of the church, and enjoy, in common with the Jews and other nations, the privileges of the millennium, ver. 18,—25.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The burden of Egypt. Behold the Lord cometh upon a swift cloud, and shall come to Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it.

2. And I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians: and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom.

3. And the spirit of Egypt shall fail in the midst of it; and I will destroy the counsel thereof; and they shall seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards.

4. And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts.

5. And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers shall be dried and dried up.

6. And they shall turn the rivers far away, and the brooks of defence shall be emp-

1. The prophecy concerning Egypt, a tale of woe. Behold **JEHOVAH** shall unexpectedly visit Egypt; and idolaters shall be disconcerted, by signal dispensations of his Providence. And the Egyptians shall be deprived of courage to resist his designs.

2. I, saith **JEHOVAH**, will begin these dispensations, by stirring up a spirit of division among the Egyptians, so that the nearest relations and closest neighbours shall be at variance with each other. And the same spirit of division shall spread universally among the nations that are enemies to the truth.

3. They shall have no courage to resist, nor wisdom to contrive means of deliverance. They shall submit to dæmon worship, and yield their consciences to them that promote it, using the various modes of divination practised by the heathen.

4. So that in just judgment, I will give them over to the dominion of Satan, whom they serve, and his vicegerent Antichrist. With cruelty and tyranny shall he govern them, saith **JEHOVAH** the Sovereign Ruler.

5. By his tyranny shall the sources of their wealth be dried up.

6, 7. The produce of their soil, and the merchandise of their cities; every thing valuable, and of little worth shall be conveyed away, by their

rapacious master. The scarcity in Egypt shall be as great, as if the river not only ceased to overflow the land, but were dried up in the chaniel.

8, 9, 10. The wealth made by fishing, and by manufacturing fine flax, the pleasure and advantage arising from fish ponds, all shall be seized by their oppressive ruler, and they who lived by these occupations shall have cause to mourn.

11, 12. The rulers of Egypt shall be destitute of wisdom, and her counsellors chargeable with folly. The counsellors shall be more intent on procuring the favour of the tyrant, and promoting their private interest, than on discharging the duties of their public office. This conduct shall involve them in ruin, through ignorance of the judgments which the sovereign Ruler hath purposed to execute upon Egypt.

13. The rulers being ignorant of the evil of sin, are strangers to the impending judgments; their security deceives the people whom they govern, into a false confidence; so that they lead to ruin those whom they ought to support.

14. Through the just judgment of God, leaving the Egyptians to the direction of their own perverseness, a spirit directly contrary to that which ought to animate them, pervades all ranks and stations. Hence their operations of every kind are disconcerted; so that the whole nation may be fitly compared to a drunken man, who sees not his

tied and dried up: the reeds and flags shall wither.

7. The paper reeds by the brooks, by the mouth of the brooks, and every thing sown by the brooks shall wither, be driven away, and be no more.

8. The fishers shall mourn, and they that cast angling into the brooks shall lament, and they that spread nets upon the waters shall languish.

9. Moreover, they that work in fine flax, and they that wear net works shall be confounded.

10. And they shall be broken in the purposes thereof, all that make sluices and ponds for fish.

11. Surely the princes of Zoan are fools, the counsel of the wise counsellors of Pharaoh is become brutish: how say ye unto Pharaoh, I am the son of the wise, the son of ancient kings.

12. Where are they where are thy wise men? and let them tell thee now, and let them know what the Lord of hosts hath purposed upon Egypt.

13. The princes of Zoan are become fools, the princes of No are deceived, they have also seduced Egypt, even they that are the stay of the tribes thereof.

14. The Lord hath mingled a perverse spirit in the midst thereof; and they have caused Egypt to err in every word thereof, as a drunken man staggereth in his vomit.

way, has no ability to walk in it, and defiles the course he takes by his vomit.

15. Neither high or low, rich or poor, old or young in Egypt, can execute to purpose the work they undertake.

16. At that time Egypt shall be ripe for judgment, while the inhabitants shall be destitute of courage to resist, and of fortitude to bear up under the calamity, which the sovereign Ruler threatens to bring upon them.

17. And the report from the land of Judah, concerning the fall of Antichrist there, shall be a terror to Egypt; every one who mentions it will secretly dread what the sovereign Ruler hath actually determined, even the downfall of the party in Egypt.

18. At that time, five parts out of six * of the land of Egypt shall embrace the true religion, and devote themselves to the service of JEHOVAH; the remaining sixth part adhering to their former superstition shall be destroyed.

19. At that time the ordinances of the true religion shall be established in the land of Egypt. In it shall be made a public profession of the true faith.

15. Neither shall there be any work for Egypt, which the head, tail, branch or rush can do.

16. In that day shall Egypt be like unto women, and it shall be afraid and fear, because of the shaking of the hand of the Lord of hosts, which he shall shake over it.

17. And the land of Judah shall be a terror unto Egypt; every one that maketh mention thereof shall be afraid in himself, because of the counsel of the Lord of hosts, which he hath determined against it.

18. In that day, all five cities in the land of Egypt shall speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts; one shall be called the city of destruction †.

19. In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof, to the Lord.

* The above is the interpretation of Calan, which I adopt, because it is most consistent with the rest of the passage. Thus, it is said that there shall be "an altar to the Lord in the midst of Egypt," and a "pillar at the border thereof," ver. 19. that "the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord," ver. 21.; that "the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians, and be the third with Israel and Assyria," ver. 23, 24. These expressions imply that the great body of the nations shall embrace the true religion. Now, five parts out of six constitute the bulk of the nation; but five cities out of all Egypt make a very small part of the nation, and

do by no means accord with the rest of the representation.

† Some read, instead of "the city of destruction," "the city of the sun," by changing the letter \aleph into κ . But Lowth, who adopts that reading, seems to suspect, that the text might have met with unfair management from Onias or his party, in order to accommodate it to his own views, and procure respect to his schismatical temple built at Heliopolis. But on the supposition, the reading suggested were more clearly established from ancient manuscripts than it can be, it would only involve the passage in obscurity. Whereas the interpretation given above is clear, and consistent with the scope of the whole passage.

20. So that it shall be evident they are not idolaters, but the devoted servants of JEHOVAH: for they shall have recourse to JEHOVAH by prayer, for deliverance from the oppressions of Antichrist, and he shall give them a knowledge of the Messiah, the only true and great Saviour of the world, who shall deliver them from idolatry and tyranny.

21. JEHOVAH shall acknowledge the Egyptians for his people; and the Egyptians shall acquire a true knowledge of JEHOVAH at that time; and shall offer those spiritual sacrifices, which are acceptable to God, through the Saviour manifested to them; yea they shall devote themselves to the service of JEHOVAH, and fulfil their vow by their obedience.

22. And JEHOVAH shall smite the Egyptians with chastisements in his Providence, but it is to heal their spiritual maladies; and they shall be converted to the love and service of JEHOVAH; and he will grant their supplications, and heal their maladies temporal and spiritual.

23. At that time there shall be a friendly intercourse and spiritual communion betwixt the Egyptians and the Assyrians, as members of the same church, holding the same faith, using the same ordinances; for they shall be alike worshippers of the same true God.

24. At that time, the Jews converted to the faith of the Messiah, and admitted as members into his church, shall hold communion with the Egyptians and Assyrians: yea they shall be a blessing in the midst of the earth, to the church extended over it.

25. The sovereign Ruler shall bless all the members of his church, and "the Gentiles shall be fellow-heirs and members of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ." Thus, he will acknowledge the Egyptians for his people, received into covenant with him: the Assyrians shall be his workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works; and the Jews as the descendants of Israel his first-born, shall be restored to his peculiar favour, and the possession of their ancient inheritance.

20. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts, in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppression, and he shall send them a Saviour, and a Great One, and he shall deliver them.

21. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation: yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it.

22. And the Lord shall smite Egypt; he shall smite and heal it, and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them.

23. In that day shall there be a high way out of Egypt to Assyria; and the Assyrians shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria: and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

24. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land.

25. Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt, my people, and Assyria, the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ARGUMENT.

HAVING described in the two preceding chapters the state of Egypt in the latter days, and mentioned Cush, in order to confirm the people of God in their belief of those things which they could not see accomplished; the prophet here foretels events, with respect to both these countries, which would be speedily accomplished; that the completion of the nearer might establish their faith in that of the more remote events. Another design of this prophecy is, to convince the people of Judah of their sin in relying more on their alliances with Cush and Egypt, than on the protection of the Deity.

It is probable that by Cush is meant Arabia here.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. In the year that Tartan came unto Ashdod, (when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him) and fought against Ashdod, and took it.

2. At the same time spake the Lord by Isaiah, the son of Amos, saying, Go, and loose the sackcloth from off thy loins, and put off thy shoe from thy foot. And he did so, walking naked and bare-foot.

3. And the Lord said, Like as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and bare-foot three years, for a sign and a wonder upon Egypt, and upon Ethiopia:

4. So shall the king of Assyria lead away the Egyptians prisoners, and the Ethiopians captives, young and old, naked and bare-foot; even with their buttocks uncovered, to the shame of Egypt.

1. This prophecy was uttered in the year that Tartan, captain of Senacherib's army, came to the city of Ashdod, being sent thither by his master, the king of Assyria, and that he besieged it, and took it.

2. At that time, JEHOVAH sent a message by Isaiah, the son of Amos, saying, Go, lay aside your garment of sackcloth and your shoes; and he did so, walking naked and bare-foot.

3. And JEHOVAH said, As my servant Isaiah has walked naked and bare-foot, a gazing-stock to the people, it is by way of sign, to represent the condition of Egypt and Cush, about three years hence.

4. Thus shall the king of Assyria lead away into captivity from their own land, the Egyptians and Cushites, not regarding age nor sex; and the severity of the conqueror shall scarce leave with the captives a rag to cover their nakedness.

5. Their allies shall be afraid; they shall be ashamed of Cush, from whence they expected defence, and of Egypt, in whose alliance they gloried.

6. And the inhabitants of the land of Judah, whom I separated from other nations, shall be convinced of their sin and folly, in trusting these nations for defence, while they neglect to rely on my protection; for in the day they shall hear of the overthrow of Egypt and Cush, their language will be that of men in despair: How miserably is our expectation disappointed! To whom shall we have recourse for deliverance from the king of Assyria? How shall we escape?

5. And they shall be afraid and ashamed of Ethiopia their expectation, and of Egypt their glory.

6. And the inhabitants of this isle shall say in that day, Behold, such is our expectation, whither we flee for help to be delivered from the king of Assyria: and how shall we escape?

CHAPTER XXI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter contains a prophecy concerning Babylon, Idumea, and Arabia. The design of it is to intimate the certain punishment of these several enemies of the church of God. The punishment of Babylon may have a further aspect to spiritual Babylon, in the latter days, for these reasons: 1st, The title (the burden of the desert of the sea) suits spiritual Babylon, represented by a woman sitting on many waters, Rev. xvii. 1,—15. 2d, The expression, v. 9. "Babylon is fallen, is fallen," is twice quoted in the apocalypse, and applied to spiritual Babylon, chap. xiv. 8. and chap. xviii. 2. 3d, The burden of Dumah or Idumea, if applied to the latter times, appears connected with the preceding part of the chapter, and admits of an easy interpretation. Edom is a term frequently used to represent spiritual Babylon. As therefore the former part of the chapter shews the judgment to be expected, this shews the effect it will have on the persons who are the objects of it; namely, that they shall continue in obstinate unbelief, ridiculing God's servants, who announce their sin and danger; which accords with the testimony of Paul, 2 Thess. ii. 11. "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusions, that they may believe a lie;" and with that of John, Rev. xvi. 9. and 11. "And they blasphemed God who had power over these plagues, and they repented not to give him glory." The prophecy concerning Arabia, may have also an aspect to the latter times. The inhabitants of that country, may be in the number of those who support Antichrist * in his last effort; if so, the judg-

* See Key to the Prophecies, page 331.

ment here threatened, may be expected in a few years after the battle of Armageddon.

THE TEXT.

1. The burden of the desert of the sea. As whirlwinds in the south pass through; so it cometh from the desert, from a terrible land.

2. A grievous vision is declared unto me; the treacherous dealer dealeth treacherously; and the spoiler spoileth: Go up, O Elam; besiege, O Media: all the fighting thereof have I made to cease.

3. Therefore are my joints filled with pain; pangs have taken hold of me, as the pangs of a woman that travaileth: I was bowed down at the hearing of it; I was dismayed at the seeing of it.

4. My heart panted; fearfulness afflicted me; the night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear unto me.

5. Prepare the table, watch in the watch-tower: eat, drink: arise ye princes, and anoint the shield.

6. For thus hath the Lord said unto me,

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. The prophecy concerning the city that hath dominion over peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues*. Sudden and furious as the hurricane occasioned by the south wind, when it arises in the desert, shall he come, who is appointed the instrument of God's vengeance, from a land terrible to the enemies of the church. A vision, grievous to the persons concerned in it, is shewed me, by him to whom all his works are known, from the beginning of the world; of which the sum is, that the measure which Babylon meted unto others, shall be measured to her again; she shall be rewarded, even as she has rewarded us; she who dealt treacherously by breaking covenant, shall be dealt treacherously with; she who spoiled others, shall be made a prey in her turn. I heard the sovereign Ruler issue his mandate to that purpose, saying, Go up against her, O Persia, besiege her, O Media; I will cause the fightings occasioned by her oppression to cease.

3. In consequence of this mandate, the Babylonians shall be filled with anguish, which shall seize upon them suddenly and irresistibly, as her pangs upon a woman that travaileth. The report of their calamity shall alarm them, and the view of it following close after, shall deprive them of all power to resist.

4. Their heart shall pant; horror shall take hold upon them; it shall come upon them in the midst of their pleasures, on a night devoted to festivity.

5. In the evening, their whole concern is to prepare for the feast; their language is, Sufficient for our defence are the watchmen on the towers, let us eat, and drink, and enjoy pleasure; but before the morning, an alarm shall be sounded, calling the princes to their arms.

6. For the fate of Babylon was revealed to me thus: The Lord said unto me, Go set a watch-

* Rev. xviii. 15.

man, let him declare to you what he seeth; he shall behold and announce what shall befall Babylon: while her own watchmen are inattentive, and give no alarm.

7. Accordingly the watchman being set, he saw first a rider*; when he approached nearer, he observed a couple of riders; when these came still closer, he observed that one of them rode an ass, the other a camel; so that they were messengers sent by two different nations. The watchmen earnestly attended to what they should say; having heard the tidings they brought, he communicated these to me, as he had been commanded.

8. He cried mightily, as† when a lion roareth, and said, "My Lord, I have faithfully discharged my trust, standing continually on the watch-tower by night and by day; so that nothing could escape me."

9. And now here comes a rider, a couple of riders, the tidings announced by them are these: "Babylon's authority is fallen, it is certainly and wholly fallen; the idolatry maintained by her is destroyed."

10. Oh! said I, how lamentable will her fate be! how grievous her punishment, even as corn threshed upon the floor! These things which I have received from JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, the God of Israel, have I declared to you.

11. The prophecy concerning Idumea, a tale

Go, set a watchman, let him declare what he seeth.

7. And he saw a chariot with a couple of horsemen, a chariot of asses, and a chariot of camels; and he hearkened diligently with much heed.

8. And he cried, (as) a lion: My Lord, I stand continually upon the watch-tower in the day-time, and I am set in my ward whole nights.

9. And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.

10. O my threshing, and the corn of my floor! that which I have heard of the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.

11. The burden of

* The word כַּרְסִי, as Lowth observes, signifies either a chariot or a rider; my reasons for taking it in the latter sense here, are these: 1st, It makes the sense of the passage clear, which, if taken for a chariot, is obscure; the two horsemen or riders following the chariot, are not mentioned in the after part of the narrative; but if taken for a rider, the account is natural and connected; what appeared one rider at a distance, turns out to be two, on a nearer approach. 2d, The words translated asses and camels, are in the singular number, in the original, but no chariot for war was ever drawn by one animal. 3d, Messen-

gers sent to carry important tidings, were never sent in chariots, but on foot, or on swift animals, as Joab sent a swift runner to announce the victory over Absalom.

† The particle *as* is sometimes omitted, as Dr William Lowth on the place observes. When inserted here it makes the sense clear, and is confirmed by the parallel passage, Rev. xviii. 2. "He cried mightily with a loud voice, Babylon is fallen, is fallen." It appears to me more natural than that given by Bishop Lowth, who supposes, that the word at first was watchman, though by the inattention of transcribers, it was made lion, a word in the original resembling it.

Dumah. He calleth me out of Seir, watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?

12. The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come.

13. The burden upon Arabia. In the forest in Arabia shall ye lodge, O ye travelling companies of Dedanim.

14. The inhabitants of the land of Tema brought water to him that was thirsty, they prevented with their bread him that fled.

15. For they fled from the sword, from the drawn sword, and from the bent bow, and from the grievousness of war.

16. For thus hath the Lord said unto me, Within a year, according to the years of an hireling, and all the glory of Kedar shall fail.

of woe. The inhabitants of Idumæa * call to me from mount Seir, as if they were anxious to know the will of God, saying, O thou that art a watchman, to see events afar off, declare what judgment† thou seest impending over us, and when shall it be executed?

12. I, as the watchman appointed of God, answered: Prosperity shall come first, but affliction shall follow after; as certainly as the night succeeds the morning. As to the particulars of the judgment impending, because your question is proposed hypocritically and scoffingly, you shall receive no answer: but if you turn to God by a genuine repentance, then come and propose your question, you shall receive a clear answer †.

13. The prophecy concerning Arabia, a tale of woe. O ye sons of Dedon, who dwell in tents, wandering through the deserts, without any fixed habitation, ye flatter yourselves, that your manner of life, and the country you inhabit, will preserve you from the invasion of an enemy. But ye shall be driven from the desert, to seek shelter in the forest.

14. Ye now abound in superfluities of which you rob others, and hold yourselves independent of all. But you shall stand in need of the very necessities of life. It is only the humanity of the inhabitants of Tema, shall prevent your fugitives from being utterly famished, by supplying them with bread and water in their flight.

15. For ye shall fly from the sword, from the sword drawn with keenness, from the bow bent with fury, from a grievous war carried on by an invading enemy.

16. For JEHOVAH hath said to me, that as pointedly as the hireling receives his wages at the close of the year, so certainly, at the time appointed, shall the glory of Kedar fail.

* That by Dumah, Idumæa is meant, is evident from the mention of mount Seir. The Spirit of prophecy frequently gives the latter enemies of the church, the names of their former persecutors.

† The night is frequently put for trouble, as the day for consolation.

† The answer is allowed to be obscure, it therefore amounts to a refusal; but the grounds of refusal are scoffing. See Ezek. xiv. 2, 3.

17. The number of his brave soldiers and powerful nobles shall be diminished. This prophecy cannot fail to be accomplished; for JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, hath spoken it.

17. And the residue of the number of archers, the mighty men of the children of Kedar, shall be diminished: for the Lord God of Israel hath spoken it.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ARGUMENT.

ALL interpreters agree, that this prophecy regards the land of Judea, which is termed the valley of vision, on account of the knowledge of divine things, communicated to the inhabitants, beyond any other nation then on earth. But they differ as to the time in which the prophecy shall be accomplished. I would observe, that they who apply it to Senacherib's invasion, go far from the prophet's meaning. That was a punishment *threatened*; this represents a grievous punishment *executed*; it is called a desolation, a treading down, ver. 4, 5.

I apprehend it points to the Roman dispersion; because the whole of the passage is more applicable to that period, than to any other: and the expressions, ver. 4. "Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you *till ye die*," can apply to that period only; for then only, the Jewish nation lost their political and religious existence, whereas they retained it in some degree, during the Babylonish captivity.

The latter part of the chapter, from the 15th verse to the close, has an immediate reference to the removal of a steward of the name of Shebna, in Hezekiah's time, and the appointment of a person called Eliakim to his office. But I am of opinion, it has a further aspect to the downfall of Antichrist in the latter days, and the open establishment of the kingdom of Christ, on his fall, for the following reasons:

1. Displacing one steward of Hezekiah, and appointing another in his stead, seems too trivial a subject for this prophecy.

2. Shebna's character resembles that of Antichrist; a vicegerent of the king, yet in reality a traitor to his master. His fate, represented ver. 18. agrees to that of Antichrist, who shall be driven from his first residence, and come to his end in a distant country, Dan. xi. 36.

3. The character of Eliakim, in its full and literal meaning, can apply only to Christ. Indeed ver. 22. is expressly applied to him, Rev. iii. 7.

4. It appears from the prophecies, that Christ will reign more visibly, after Antichrist falls. The robe of dignity, and key of office, usurped by the one, shall on his fall be openly assumed by the other.

5. By this interpretation there appears an obvious connexion, betwixt the former and the latter part of the chapter. As the former part shews the calamities brought upon the Jews by the Romans, which ended in the destruction of their state and polity: so the latter part points out the time of restoring their political and religious establishment, namely, when Antichrist falls, and Christ openly reigns.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The burden of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house-tops?

1. The prophecy concerning the land of Judah and city of Jerusalem, places eminent for Divine revelation, a tale of woe. What mean ye, O men of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem, that ye are all gone up to the tops of your houses, as persons are wont to do, in great alarm, or in deep sorrow *.

2. Thou that art full of stir, a tumultuous city, a joyous city: thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.

2. Thou, O Jerusalem, wast wont to be crowded with people, and full of noise, especially at the solemn festivals; but now thou art full of slain men, while they have not been honoured to fall in the field of battle, in defence of their religion and laws †.

3. All thy rulers are bound together, they are bound by the archers; all that are found in thee are bound together, which have fled from far.

3. All thy rulers who ought to have defended thy land have ignominiously fled; they have fled from the remote skirts of the land; they have crowded into thee, as to a place of safety; but there they are shut up as in a prison by the invading enemy; yea, all that are found in thee are shut up as in prison, enduring every hardship ‡.

4. Therefore, said I, look away from me, I will weep bitterly,

4. My heart is so affected with a view of the calamities of my nation, that I wish to be alone to

* Chap. xv. 3.

† This representation agrees with the account which Josephus gives of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Many more died by famine, by the assassinations of the Sicarii and Idumeans, and by ignominious punishments, than fell by the conqueror's sword.

‡ The comment in the paraphrase, fully verified by the event, renders unnecessary

the criticism of Houbigant, in which he is followed by Bishop Lowth. He makes the word translated "bound," to signify "removed," by changing one letter. "If the leaders were bound, (says he), how could they flee away?" I answer, They fled "from afar," that is, from the remote skirts of the land to the fortified cities, especially to Jerusalem; and that slight furnished the occasion of their captivity.

indulge grief: I will weep bitterly *, attempt not to comfort me, because of the spoiling of my people.

5. For the period I contemplate will be a time of extraordinary trouble, such as never came upon the nation on any former occasion †. A period, not merely of scourging men, but of treading them down as the mire of the streets. A time of perplexity, so that no wisdom can devise a way of deliverance, nor even a mitigation of the calamity. A time of vengeance from JEHOVAH the sovereign Ruler, executed in the land famous for Divine revelations: a vengeance that will issue in breaking down the walls of Jerusalem, and reducing its remaining inhabitants to despair, so as to seek death rather than life ‡.

6. The persons designed of God as the instruments of this vengeance, shall be experienced warriors. They shall be expert as the Persians, in the use of the bow; dexterous as the Syrians || in the management of horses and chariots; skilful as the inhabitants of Kir in wielding the shield §.

* The prophets were sometimes deeply affected with a view of the calamities which they foretold. Thus, Elisha, foreseeing the evils which Hazael would bring upon Israel, "he looked in his face and wept," 2 Kings viii. 11, 12. The reason seems to be, that they were as strongly impressed with the reality of the events they foretold, as if they had been transacted in their presence.

† This exactly agrees with the testimony of our Lord, concerning the same times. "For there shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be. And except these days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake they shall be shortened," Mat. xxiv. 20,---22.

‡ "Crying to the mountains," I consider to be an expression similar to that used Rev. vi. 16. "And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the face of the Lamb." A strong figure, intimating that men prefer the most awful death to life, in their present desperate distress. The words are very applicable to the state of the Jews, during the Roman invasion; for multitudes, (by the

labour not to comfort me; because of the spoiling of the daughter of my people.

5. For it is a day of trouble, and of treading down, and of perplexity, by the Lord God of hosts in the valley of vision, breaking down the walls, and of crying to the mountains.

6. And Elam bare the quiver, with chariots of men and horsemen, and Kir uncovered the shield.

testimony of Josephus) put an end to their lives in despair.

|| "It is not easy to say, what **רכב ארם**, a chariot of men, can mean. It seems by the form of the sentence, consisting of three members, the first and third mentioning a particular people, that the second should do so likewise; thus **רכב ארם ופרשים**, with chariots the Syrian and with horsemen, the similitude of the letters **ך** and **ר** is so great, and the mistakes arising from it so frequent, that I readily adopt the correction of Houbigant, **ארם** instead of **אֶרֶם**, which seems to me extremely probable." Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

§ It is customary with the prophets to disguise the names of persons or of nations introduced as actors in the distant events they foretel, by giving them the names of persons or of nations existing in their own times; on account of a mutual resemblance in certain qualities. As to the Romans intended here, there can be no doubt, but they possessed all the bravery and military skill of the several warlike nations that preceded them; and so might be justly compared to the Persians, Syrians, and inhabitants of Kir, in the several arts in which each of these excelled.

7. And it shall come to pass, that thy choicest vallies shall be full of chariots, and the horsemen shall set themselves in array at the gate.

8. And he discovered the covering of Judah, and thou didst look in that day to the armour of the house of the forest.

9. Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool.

10. And ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down, to fortify the wall.

11. Ye made also a ditch between the two walls, for the water of the old pool; but ye have not looked unto the maker thereof, neither had respect to him that fashioned it long ago.

12. And in that day did the Lord God of hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to fasting with sackcloth.

13. And behold, joy

7. They shall be so numerous, that the choicest vallies of the land of Judea shall be covered with them: and their cavalry shall set themselves in array at the gate of Jerusalem.

8, 9. They shall take away the bulwarks of Judah, by destroying the fenced cities, and demolishing the temple. As for you, O inhabitants of Judah, at that time, ye shall use every effort for the preservation of Jerusalem. Ye shall provide arms out of the house of the forest, the arsenal where they are kept for times of necessity. Ye shall consider the breaches of the city of David, and repair them, though they are many; ye shall provide abundance of water for the inhabitants during the siege.

10. Ye shall break down such of the houses of Jerusalem as may be most easily spared, for the purpose of fortifying the wall.

11. Ye shall fortify separately the higher and the lower city, with a ditch betwixt the two walls, conveying the water of the old pool into the ditch, that if one should be taken, ye may defend the other. But after the use of every mean, which the experience of former times * had approved, or the necessity of your circumstances may suggest, your labour shall be fruitless; the city shall be taken; because ye have no trust in God the builder and preserver of the city; nor reverence for his ordinances, who made choice of it as the place in which he put his name.

12, 13. Another cause of your ruin is, that JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, did at that time call upon you by his servants, to a great and unfeigned mourning for the sins of your nation: but ye, on the contrary, abandoned yourselves to joy, festivity, and the indulgence of every carnal plea-

* A great part of this plan was actually accomplished by Hezekiah, when invaded by Sennacherib; and by Zedekiah, when besieged by Nebuchadnezzar. But it appears from Josephus, that the defence of

the Jews, during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, was more spirited, and their resistance more desperate, than in either of the former cases.

sure *. When the scourge of Divine Providence confirmed the testimony of his servants, ye made your calamity an argument for continuing your ill-timed festivity; speaking the language of persons obstinate and desperate: If we must die to-morrow, let us enjoy our pleasures to day.

14. It was assuredly revealed to me, by JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, that this iniquity shall not be forgiven you, till your political and religious existence be dissolved.

and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die.

14. And it was revealed in mine ears by the Lord of hosts. Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of hosts.

ANTICHRIST.

15. JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, said unto me, Go and deliver my message, concerning him who professes to be the vicegerent of the King of kings, and the supreme Ruler of his church; yet is a traitor to the master he pretends to serve, say to him,

16. What hast thou as a ground of confidence? Who are thy supporters? that thou boastest of having formed a system to perpetuate thine office, throughout all generations, in defiance of the changes of time, and the ravages of death?

SHEBNA †.

15. JEHOVAH, the sovereign ruler, said unto me, Go and deliver my message to the treasurer of the kingdom of Judah, even to Shebna, who is the ruler of the king's household, but a traitor to his master, say to him,

16. What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here? that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

15. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, and say,

16. What hast thou here? and whom hast thou here? that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock?

* The great duty urged upon the Jews by the apostles, was repentance for the heinous crime of crucifying the Lord of Life; but the generality of the nation rejoiced in the crime they had committed. Some time after, when they were deluded by Barcochab, who pretended to be the Messiah, they abandoned themselves to the excesses reproved; here their joy in discovering him whom they esteemed the Messiah, was what

encouraged them to rebel against the Roman government, and so proved the occasion of the ruin here threatened.

† See the argument of this chapter. In prophecies which have a double meaning, all the expressions are so happily chosen, that they apply to each event. In order to illustrate this, I have given a paraphrase on both the events foretold in this passage, in separate columns.

SHEBNA.

ANTICHRIST.

and that thy name shall be carried down with honour to all posterity?

17. Behold, the Lord will carry thee away with a mighty captivity, and will surely cover thee.

18. He will surely violently turn and toss thee, like a ball, into a large country: there shalt thou die: and there the chariots of thy glory shall be the shame of thy lord's house.

19. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state, shall he pull thee down.

20. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will call my servant Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah.

17. Behold JEHOVAH will cause thee to be carried into captivity, O mighty man*. He will surely cause thy face to be covered, after the manner of captives and condemned criminals†.

18. He will surely subject thee to various changes, and cast thee out violently from thy residence, like a ball out of a sling, into a large country; there thou shalt die, and the monuments of thy former power shall prove the disgrace of the house which bestowed it.

19. And I, saith JEHOVAH, will deprive thee of thine office, and will degrade thee from thy elevated station.

20. And at the time thou art deprived, I will call to the office thou didst unrighteously discharge, my servant Eliakim, the son of Hil- kiah.

17. Behold JEHOVAH will remove thee from the place of thy residence, O thou that pretendest to be superior to all; he will cause thee to be condemned by those who once adored thee.

18. He will surely subject thee to various changes, and cast thee out violently, like a stone out of a sling, from the place of thy residence, into a distant country‡. There thou shalt come to an end; and the monuments of thy former glory, shall prove the disgrace of the society over which thou didst bear rule.

19. And I, saith JEHOVAH, will deprive thee of thine office, and will degrade thee from thy elevated station.

20. And at the time thou art deprived ||, I will call to the office thou didst usurp, the Messiah, who is eminently my servant, and may be called Eliakim §,

* I reckon the word *gaber* to be in the vocative; by it the prophet treats with contempt, Shebna's conceit of himself.

† Haman's face was covered, when he was ordered for execution, Esther vii. 8.

‡ See Key to the prophecies, Part III. chap. iv. § 1

|| Christ was ruler of the church from his ascension, Psal. cx. but it is after the fall of Antichrist, that his kingdom becomes visible to all, Rev. xi. 15.

§ Raised up of God.

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16. What hast thou here as a ground of confidence ? Who are thy friends or relations in this place ? that thou hast built a costly sepulchre, hewed out of the rock, after the manner of princes ; from an expectation that thou wilt continue in thine office,

15. Thus saith the Lord God of hosts, Go, get thee unto this treasurer, even unto Shebna, who is over the house, and say,

16. What hast thou here ? and whom hast thou here ? that thou hast hewed thee out a sepulchre here, as he that heweth him out a sepulchre on high, and that graveth an habitation for himself in a rock ?

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encouraged them to rebel against the Roman government, and so proved the occasion of the ruin here threatened.

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19. And I will drive thee from thy station, and from thy state, shall he pull thee down.

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§ Raised up of God.

ANTICHRIST.

in regard he is appointed by me to that office.

SHEBNA.

CHRIST.

21. I will give him the honour assumed by thee, and bestow on him the power held by thee. I will visibly commit to him the government of the church, presumptuously usurped by thee; and he shall govern the members of it with paternal affection, supplying their wants, relieving their distresses, and protecting them from dangers.

22. I will give him all authority and power over the church, to bestow grace and glory; to admit to, or exclude from the privileges of God's children, according to his good pleasure.

23. I will establish him in his authority, for the benefit of the church which he governs; and he shall raise up his faithful followers, esteemed by him his relations, to sit with him on the throne of glory.

24. On him alone shall depend the glory of the church, his heavenly Father's dwelling-

ELIAKIM.

21. I will clothe him with the robe of dignity, and strengthen him with the girdle of office, formerly worn by thee. I will commit the government of Judah, once held by thee, into his hand; and he shall govern the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the people of Judah with paternal affection, supplying their wants, relieving their distresses, and protecting them from dangers.

22. I will lay the key of the house of David on his shoulder, in testimony of his authority over it; with full power to admit into it, and exclude from it, according to his good pleasure.

23. As a pin is commonly fastened in a place of safety, to hang on it the vessels of the house, for their preservation; so will I establish him in his authority, for the benefit of those whom he governs, and he shall raise to honour his kindred and relations.

24. On him alone shall depend the glory of the house of David, from which he is de-

21. And I will clothe him with thy robe, and strengthen him with thy girdle, and I will commit thy government into his hand; and he shall be a father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and to the house of Judah.

22. And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open.

23. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house.

24. And they shall hang upon him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the issue, all vessels

ELIAKIM.

CHRIST.

of small quantity; from the vessels of cups, even to all the vessels of wagons.

scended. The advantages of his government shall extend to posterity; and shall be felt by persons of all ranks and conditions, high and low, rich and poor.

place. The advantages of his government shall extend to all generations; and shall be experienced by persons of all ranks and conditions, high and low, rich and poor.

25. In that day, with the Lord of hosts, shall the nail that is fastened in the sure place be removed, and be cut down and fall; and the burden that was upon it shall be cut off; for the Lord hath spoken it.

25. At that time, when I will establish Eliakim in the government of the house of David, Shebna shall be removed from that station. Though to human appearance, he is now immoveable, like a pin firmly fastened in a safe place; yet he shall fall from his authority and influence in the kingdom; and his fall shall occasion the ruin of his dependents; for JEHOVAH hath spoken it, who is able to accomplish it.

25. At that time, when I will visibly establish the kingdom of the Messiah, Antichrist shall be deprived of his usurped authority. Though to human appearance, he seem firmly established in his station, for a time, yet he shall fall from his authority and influence in the world; and his fall shall involve in it, the ruin of the system supported by him, and the society dependent on him as their head: for JEHOVAH hath spoken it, who is able to accomplish it.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet in this chapter predicts the punishment and desolation of Tyre, a city famous for its wealth and traffic, ver. 1.—14. It is commonly supposed to have been accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar. The restoration of Tyre, at the end of seventy years, is foretold, ver. 15, 16. That she would return to her former traffic, and the vices that accompanied it, ver. 17. That her traffic should be sanctified, ver. 18. It is not necessary for the completion of this part of the prophecy, that it should take place shortly after her restoration. It refers to the reception of the gospel by the Tyrians, about the beginning of the Christian æra. It seems to be

introduced here as a reason why God spared the Tyrians, notwithstanding they had returned to the commission of the same sins, which had occasioned their former captivity. They were spared for the sake of a future, though distant generation, who would embrace the truth.

There is some obscurity in this passage, owing to the frequent changes of the tenses and persons. In order to remove this in some degree, it will be proper to observe, that the chapter consists of eight stanzas; each of these begins with an address either to Tyre, or to persons interested in the fate of Tyre; and each of them concludes with an illustration of the address, delivered in the way of narrative.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The prophecy concerning Tyre, a tale of woe. Howl, ye mariners of Tarshish*, who were wont to trade in the fairs of Tyre; for your market place is laid waste. There are neither houses to lodge in, nor so much as a harbour to receive your ships. They shall receive the first intelligence of this desolation, on the coasts of the Mediterranean.

2. Be astonished, O inhabitants of Tyre, at the change of your condition; ye were formerly filled with the conveniences and luxuries of life, by the merchants of Zidon, and all those that for the sake of traffic pass through the sea.

3. The corn also of Egypt, where the harvests are plentiful, by the overflowing of the Nile, was a revenue to her; for she is the general market of the nations.

4. Be ashamed, O Zidon, for Tyre which commanded the sea, even the strongest maritime city, hath cause to say in truth and sorrow, All my inhabitants are gone into captivity, nor have I the hope of being inhabited by a future generation.

5. As at the report concerning the conquest of Egypt, so shall the Zidonians be grievously distressed, at the report concerning the destruction of Tyre.

THE TEXT.

1. The burden of Tyre. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for it is laid waste, so that there is no house, no entering in: from the land of Chittim it is revealed to them.

2. Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle, thou, whom the inhabitants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished.

3. And by great waters the seed of Sennacherib, the harvest of the river is her revenue, and she is a mart of nations.

4. Be thou ashamed, O Zidon; for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not now, I bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins.

5. As at the report concerning Egypt, so shall they be sorely pained at the report of Tyre.

* Probably Tartessus in Spain.

6. Pass ye over to Tarshish; howl, ye inhabitants of the isle.

7. Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of ancient days? her own feet shall carry her afar off to sojourn.

8. Who hath taken this counsel against Tyre? the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth?

9. The Lord of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring in to contempt all the honourable of the earth.

10. Pass through thy land as a river, O daughter of Tarshish: there is no more strength.

11. He stretched out his hand over the sea, he shook the kingdoms: the Lord hath given a commandment against the merchant city, to destroy the strong holds thereof.

12. And he said, thou shalt no more rejoice, O thou oppressed virgin, daughter of Zidon: arise, pass over

6. Pass over to Tarshish as a refuge, when exiled from your country; mourn bitterly for the change of your condition, ye inhabitants of Tyre.

7. Your enemies will tauntingly say of you, Is this the city where joy prevailed? How mournfully it looks when deprived of its inhabitants? Is this the city that boasted of its antiquity, and flattered itself with a perpetual duration? How completely is it ruined! Are these the people who scorned to tread the earth, while they rode triumphant on the sea? They must now walk on foot to a distant country, and live there as strangers, when carried into captivity.

8. But at present ye will disregard this prophecy, and ask, Who hath counselled to destroy Tyre? What power is able to accomplish the ruin of that city, which bestows on her inhabitants, the wealth and honour of kings? her merchants rank with princes, and her traffickers are on a level with the highest class of citizens in any nations.

9. I will answer that question. JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, hath purposed the ruin of Tyre, in order to bring down the pride that is founded on worldly glory; and reduce to contempt, those who are held in honour among men, while they are earthly-minded, and regard not God.

10. O Tyre, enriched by the trade of Tarshish, pass through thy land, as a river driven out of its channel; Go, ye inhabitants of Tyre, into captivity, to another country; for no power or device can retain you in your present place and condition.

11. JEHOVAH, who dried up the Red Sea, by stretching his hand over it, shall prevent the sea from being any longer a bulwark to Tyre. He shall excite commotions in the kingdoms that have made treaties with her, so that they can give her no aid. He hath resolved, and shall deprive her of every mean of defence; notwithstanding she is famous for her shipping and her wealth, in consequence of her extensive commerce.

12. JEHOVAH hath said, ye shall enjoy pleasure no longer, O ye Tyrians, descended of the Zidonians, but shall resemble an oppressed and deserted virgin, whose pleasure is turned into pain.

Would ye avoid captivity, arise, quit your own country, pass over to the coasts of the Mediterranean; but there ye shall not be in safety; because your conqueror will pursue you thither.

13. Behold your conqueror cometh from the land of the Chaldeans. (This people were not known among the nations, till the Assyrian founded Babylon as a seat of empire, for them that were formerly wanderers in the wilderness. They afterwards became famous, by rearing the walls of Babylon, and building the palaces of it.) This people shall make Tyre a complete ruin.

14. Mourn bitterly, ye mariners of Tarshish, for Tyre that furnished a market for your commodities and wealth, in return for them, is laid waste.

15. After Tyre is laid waste, she shall continue neglected, as a commercial city, for seventy years, that period being the duration of the Babylonian empire, from the period of her ruin. At the end of seventy years, Tyre shall use every art to restore her commerce, as a harlot uses art to inveigle lovers.

16. O Tyre, thou that hast been neglected, use every art for the restoration of thy commerce, that thou mayest bring customers to thy market: even as the harlot takes a harp, goes about in the streets, plays melodiously, and sings frequently, that she may procure admirers.

17. Her arts shall not be fruitless, yet their success is not owing to her policy, but to the Divine appointment: for at the end of seventy years, JEHOVAH shall look in mercy on Tyre, and her commerce shall be restored. But in consequence of her commerce, and the wealth derived from it, she shall be again involved in the sins which commonly accompany these, as lewdness, covetousness and idolatry. She shall not only be addicted to these sins herself, but likewise communicate them along with her wares, to all the nations of the earth.

18. Though this conduct merits, at the hand of God, sudden and irreparable destruction; yet for the sake of future generations, Tyre shall be spared. And the time shall come, when her com-

to Chittim, there also shalt thou have no rest.

13. Behold the land of the Chaldeans; this people was not till the Assyrian founded it, for them that dwell in the wilderness: They set up the towers thereof; they raised up the palaces thereof, and he brought (shall bring) it to ruin.

14. Howl, ye ships of Tarshish, for your strength is laid waste.

15. And it shall come to pass in that day, that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: after the end of seventy years, shall Tyre sing as an harlot.

16. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten, make sweet melody, sing many songs, that thou mayest be remembered.

17. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world, upon the face of the earth.

18. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up:

for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing.

merce and her wealth shall be sanctified. Her wealth shall not be hoarded up to gratify covetousness, nor consumed on mens lusts; but shall be laid out, to procure the necessaries and conveniences of life, for those who shall be members of the true church of God.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

INTERPRETERS are much divided as to the places and persons, still more so, as to the times, the Spirit of prophecy has in view in this chapter. However I cannot doubt, but the persons in view are the Jews, and the places Judea and Jerusalem. This appears from ver. 5. where the causes of the judgment threatened are said to be, "their transgressing the laws, changing the ordinances, and breaking the everlasting covenant." But to them only, under the Old Testament dispensation, pertained the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, Rom. ix. 4. Other nations, (from the prophet's days until the propagation of the gospel), would not be said to transgress laws they received not, to change ordinances not given them, nor to break a covenant which was not made with them. Calvin objects against this application to the Jews, that mention is made of the world, ver. 4.; but that may be taken in a figurative sense, intimating the downfall of their government, as well as the desolation of their land. I am equally clear, that the particular judgment in view, is that of the Roman dispersion; because all the circumstances of the narrative agree to that period, and to no other. As,

1. The total desolation of their land, and destruction of their capital city, ver. 1,—12.

2. The small remnant of the nation, who should joyfully sing of the Majesty of the Lord, namely, the converts to Christianity, coeval with that period, ver. 13,—15. The description is the same with chap. 1. ver. 9. Except the Lord, &c.; applied by the apostle Paul to the converts of his own time, Rom. chap. ix. ver. 29.

3. The propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles, even to the remotest regions of the earth, ver. 16.; which took place in the apostolic age, as the apostle asserts, Rom. x. 18. and is particularly mentioned by our Saviour, as a mark of the approaching dissolution of the Jewish state and polity by the Romans, Mat. xxiv. ver. 14.

4. The leanness of the Jews as to their spiritual condition, their treachery, and the greatness of their punishment, ver. 16,—20.

The three last verses of the chapter represent the 'battle of Armageddon, and the millennium; for all the circumstances agree to that period.

1. The kings of the earth are gathered together, as prisoners in the pit, ver. 21. and 22. So the apostle, Rev. xvi. ver. 14, 16. says, "Three unclean spirits go forth into the kings of the earth, and the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty; and they gathered them together." And Rev. xix. ver. 19, 20. "I saw the beast and the kings, &c. These both were cast alive into the lake of fire."

2. The host of the high ones are punished, compare ver. 25. to Rev. xx. ver. 2. "An angel laid hold on the devil, and bound him a thousand years."

3. These high ones after many days shall be visited, that is, liberated: so at the end of the thousand years Satan is loosed, Rev. xx. ver. 3. 7.

4. At the time the high ones and the kings of the earth are punished, the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously, ver. 23. So, after the kings of the earth are overcome, and Satan is bound, the new Jerusalem descends, and the martyrs of Jesus are set on thrones of judgment, Rev. xx. ver. 4.

The connexion of the three last verses, with the preceding part of the chapter, seems to be this: The prophet having said, ver. 20. "The earth, (or land of Judea) shall fall and not rise again," that is suddenly; but shall remain a long time under the influence of the judgment described: then adds, "And it shall come to pass in that day," namely, in which it shall rise again, "that the Lord shall punish," &c. Now it appears obviously, that the Jews are parties on one side in the battle of Armageddon, as the beast and the kings of the earth are on the other side; and that by the victory then obtained, they take possession of the land, from which they had been long excluded.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Be astonished at the events I foretel. JEHOVAH at some future period shall make the land of Judea empty of inhabitants, a waste for want of cultivation; he shall alter the face* of it from the appearance of fertility to barrenness; and disperse the inhabitants among the nations.

* ועורפניה literally, he shall cause the face of it to be distorted or altered; a circumstance very applicable to Judea since

the Roman dispersion, by the testimony of all travellers.

THE TEXT.

1. Behold the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.

2. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the servant, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the taker of usury, so with the giver of usury.

3. The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled; for the Lord hath spoken this word.

4. The earth mourneth, and fadeth away; the world languisheth, and fadeth away; the haughty people of the earth do languish.

5. The earth also is defiled, under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinances, broken the everlasting covenant.

6. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

7. The new wine mourneth, the vine languisheth, all the merry-hearted do sigh.

8. The mirth of tabrets ceaseth; the noise of them that rejoice endeth, the joy of the heart ceaseth.

2. Persons of all ranks and conditions shall be involved in the calamity, high and low, men and women, rich and poor, the oppressors and the oppressed.

3. The land shall be wholly deprived of its inhabitants. All their effects shall become the spoil of their enemies: JEHOVAH, who is able to accomplish it, hath uttered this prophecy.

4. The nation is as a widow mourning over her losses, and emaciated through grief; their political establishment is dissolved, and their glory is faded: the mighty of the land, proud of their wealth and power, fade away.

5. This punishment shall be inflicted consistently with justice; for the land is defiled by the sins of the inhabitants; for they have transgressed the law given them, making the word of God of none effect, by their traditions, Mark vii. ver. 13. omitting the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith, Mat. xxiii. ver. 23. They have changed the ordinances, enjoined them, while they rest in the outward ceremonies, without apprehending their spiritual meaning; and they have broken the everlasting covenant, by rejecting the promised seed of Abraham, in whom that covenant is confirmed.

6. Therefore the curse annexed to the violation of the covenant, has devoured the land. The inhabitants are guilty*, they are therefore consumed as if it were by fire, and few left.

7. The vineyards are destroyed, and the vintage is become the prey of the enemy; so that for want of wine, the merry-hearted sigh.

8. The sound of music, and the noise of those that dance to it, have ceased.

* So the word ought to be rendered.

9. The cheerfulness of the festive board, where men drink wine with a song, is at an end; and if any have access to strong drink, it shall neither gratify their palates, nor comfort their hearts, because of the greatness of their affliction.

10. The city of Jerusalem crowded with people, is taken by storm*: Every house is shut up, as the last resource of the wretched inhabitants, to keep out the enemy.

11. The enemy cry for wine in the streets, to spirit them up to slaughter; every ray of hope, that could cheer the inhabitants, is darkened; Jerusalem, the joy of the land, is gone into captivity†.

12. The city is left a desolation; the gates and walls are utterly destroyed.

13. When these judgments on the land shall be conspicuously accomplished, a few among the people like the berries left on the olive tree after the fruit is shaken, or the grapes that are gleaned when the vintage is done.

14. They shall lift up their voice with joy, while the rest mourn, they shall sing, while others howl; not on account of any temporal advantages, but for the majesty of JEHOVAH, manifested in the gospel, emancipating their souls from the power of death and hell. They shall cry aloud, proclaiming the gospel, and their spiritual privileges, to distant regions.

15. To such I give counsel, glorify JEHOVAH, by adhering to your Redeemer, and his religion, in the midst of those persecutions with which your faith shall be tried; put your trust in him, who is the self-existent, the God of your fathers, even when ye are dispersed in distant countries.

16. Hark! I hear songs of triumph from the remotest corners of the earth: The gospel has prevailed among the heathen; converted sinners celebrate the glory of the Messiah, even of him

9. They shall not drink wine with a song; strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it.

10. The city of confusion is broken down; every house is shut up, that no man may come in.

11. There is a crying for wine in the streets; all joy is darkened, the mirth of the land is gone.

12. In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten with destruction.

13. When thus it shall be in the midst of the land, among the people, there shall be as the shaking of an olive tree, and as the gleaning grapes, when the vintage is done.

14. They shall lift up their voice, they shall sing for the Majesty of the Lord, they shall cry aloud from the sea.

15. Wherefore, glorify ye the Lord in the fires, even the name of the Lord God of Israel, in the isles of the sea.

16. From the uttermost part of the earth have we heard songs, even glory to the righteous. But I

* This, and the two following verses, I consider as a description of the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans.

† **גלות** commonly is used to signify carrying into captivity; the joy of the land, was the name given Jerusalem. See Lam. ii. ver. 15.

said, My leanness, my leanness, woe unto me: the treacherous dealers have dealt treacherously; yea, the treacherous dealers have dealt very treacherously.

who is the Lord, our righteousness, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) who was made sin for us, though he knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, (2 Cor. v. 20.) While I rejoice in their triumph, I deplore the spiritual condition of my kinsmen according to the flesh. God has sent leanness into their souls, they are deprived of the ordinances of religion, I mourn over them: yet the dispensations of God are just; their leanness is the effect of their treachery: their wickedness is extreme, in refusing instruction, in maltreating the servants of God, and in killing the Prince of Life.

17. Fear, and the pit, and the snare, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the earth.

17. According to your treachery, shall be your punishments, O inhabitant of Judea, the judgments of God shall be many and successive, like the devices of a hunter to seize on wild beasts.

18. And it shall come to pass, that he who fleeth from the noise of the fear, shall fall into the pit; and he that cometh up out of the midst of the pit, shall be taken in the snare; for the windows from on high are open, and the foundations of the earth do shake.

18, 19. Though you escape one judgment, you shall fall by another; as if a wild beast, flying from the hunter's device, to terrify him, should fall into the pit dug for him; or after scrambling out of the pit, should be taken in the snare laid for him. Thus, the punishment begun by the first judgment shall be completed by the last; for wrath shall come upon you to the uttermost, 1 Thess. ii. ver. 16. It shall be poured out in full measure on your land, as formerly on the earth at the deluge; when the windows of heaven were opened, and the fountains of the great deep were broken up, Gen. vii. ver. 11. The people of the land shall be utterly crushed; the government shall be quite dissolved; the inhabitants shall be wholly removed into captivity, and all shall be owing to themselves*.

19. The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved; the earth is moved exceedingly.

20. They shall be destitute of counsel and strength, like one that is drunk; though seemingly having a firm establishment, they shall be as easily removed out of their land, as a cottage built for a temporary purpose, and then plucked up.

20. The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it, and

* In each of these sentences the verb is in Hithphael, which commonly signifies any action done to ones-self; they may be literally translated thus: *confringit se--dissipat se--dimovet se*. This exactly agrees with Josephus' account of the Roman inva-

sion. The phrenzy of the Jews themselves, even in defiance of the Roman clemency, occasioned the slaughter of multitudes, the dissolution of the government, and other punishments.

Their own transgressions, and those of their fathers, shall bring them to the lowest condition of misery and contempt *. In this condition they shall remain, not for a short season, as in their preceding punishments, but for a very long period of time †.

21. At the close of that period, in the day when JEHOVAH shall restore Israel and their land to his favour, he shall seize on Satan, and his host, "these wicked spirits that dwell in high places," (Eph. vi. 12.) "he shall bind him, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he may not deceive the nations any more, till a thousand years be fulfilled," (Rev. xx. ver. 2, 3.) He shall summon also the kings of the earth, enemies to the true religion, and supporters of the beast and his adherents, to Armageddon.

22. Thither they come with an expectation of victory, but there shall they be taken as prisoners in a pit. The beast and false prophets shall be cast into the lake of fire; the kings shall be slain, and the remains of their party shall be crushed, (Rev. xix. ver. 20. 25.) But after many days, even at the end of a thousand years, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall stir up persons of a similar spirit with those destroyed at Armageddon, to oppose the truth, (Rev. xx. ver. 3.)

23. But during the continuance of these thousand years, the kingdom of JEHOVAH shall be openly established among men; it shall excel in power and glory the kingdoms of the world, as if a superior light should obscure the brightness of the natural sun and moon ‡. It shall extend over all the church, and be conspicuous among the converted Israelites.

* This agrees with the denunciations of our Saviour, against the generation among whom he lived, Mat. xxiii. ver. 34, 35. 36.

† That the true meaning of the passage is expressed in the paraphrase, and that it does not signify an everlasting continuance, is obvious from ver. 23. where the exaltation of Zion and Jerusalem is again represented.

‡ The expressions have the same import with Isaiah, chap. lx. ver. 19. "The sun shall no more be thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God, thy glory." And with Rev. xxii. ver. 5. "and they need no candle, neither the light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light."

it shall fall and not rise again.

21. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth.

22. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

23. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE whole of this chapter refers to the millenium. The prophet having foreseen and proclaimed that happy Era, in the close of the preceding chapter, he gives vent to his gratitude in this, by a song of praise, in which he enumerates the several grounds of thanksgiving, peculiar to that period; as, the completion of prophecy, ver. 1.; the destruction of spiritual Babylon, ver. 2.; the preservation of his church and people under the tyranny of Babylon, ver. 3, 4, 5.; the free, extensive, and successful propagation of the gospel, ver. 6, 7, 8.; the triumph of the church for her deliverance, and the destruction of her enemies, ver. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

THE TEXT.

1. O Lord, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

2. For thou hast made of a city an heap; of a fenced city a ruin; a palace of strangers to be no city; it shall never be built.

3. Therefore shall the strong people glorify thee, the city of

THE PARAPHRASE.

My soul being enraptured with these glorious views of future times, I found it in my heart to sing this song of praise.

1. O JEHOVAH, I claim an interest in thee as my God, and rejoice in that relation. It will be my delightful employment to magnify thee, and to celebrate the glory of thy perfections: for the dispensations of thy providence are wonderful; by these thou hast proved thy eternal councils, revealed to, and proclaimed by thy servants the prophets, to be faithful and true.

2. Thou hast destroyed spiritual Babylon*, against which thy wrath has been so frequently denounced; that system, defended by human policy and satan's wiles, thou hast ruined; that palace pretending to be thy temple†, but in reality, possessed by strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and aliens from the covenants of promise, has ceased to exist; the city shall‡ never be built, nor shall the system of its subjects ever be revived.

2. Therefore the gospel shall have free course and be glorified||; so that the fierce people who were disobedient to thy law, shall glorify thee by

* That spiritual Babylon is the city meant, is obvious from the connection; see the argument of the former chapter. It is that city which is destroyed, after the con-

version of the Jews, and immediately before the millennium, Rev. xvi. 19.

† 2 Thess. ii. 4.

‡ Eph. ii. 12.

|| 2 Thess. iii. 1.

submission; and the nations who persecuted thy church, shall join the society of them that fear thy name.

4. I will praise thee for having preserved thy church in her low condition; during the tyranny of Babylon thou hast maintained the faith of thy poor ones, and supplied the wants of thy needy ones, in their distresses. Thou hast been to them a shelter amidst the storms of persecution, and a shade amidst the heats of division. When the rage of their fierce persecutors attacked them like a tempest, thou didst make them as a wall built upon a rock; though the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that wall, it fell not*.

5. And now thou hast deprived these strangers of the power to persecute, and delivered thy people in thy own time and way. As to the weary traveller, ready to faint with heat in the desert, having neither the shade of a tree, nor the covert of a rock to screen him, thou interposest a cloud, to prove a covert to his head. The triumph of those persecutors is at an end.

6. In the church, at this period, JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, shall provide spiritual blessings in abundance, not for one people only, as formerly, but for all nations; and these in such measure, that they may be fully compared to a royal feast, in which the variety of delicacies and exquisite wines are calculated to gratify every palate, and cheer every heart.

7. And in the church, at this period, he will wholly remove the ignorance of all nations, which, like a covering cast on the face of criminals, or a vail spread before the eyes†, prevented them from discerning their misery or their remedy; for he will command "the day-spring from on high to visit them," and "give the Spirit of wisdom and

the terrible nations shall fear thee.

4. For thou hast been a strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, a shadow from the heat, when the blast of the terrible ones is as a storm against the wall.

5. Thou shalt bring down the noise of strangers, as the heat in a dry place; even the heat with the shadow of a cloud; the branch of the terrible ones shall be brought low.

6. And in this mountain, shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people, a feast of fat things; a feast of wines on the lees; of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.

7. And he will destroy in this mountain, the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.

* Mat. vii. 25.

† Uncovering the face, and removing the veil, implies, 1st, The outward knowledge of the gospel; 2d, Apprehending the true meaning of the gospel, by the teaching of the Spirit. The Jews have the law and the prophets, and read them, but the veil

is on their hearts; 3d, Justification by the knowledge of Christ. When Ahab ordered Heman for execution, they covered his face, Esther vii. 8. Doubtless had the orders been countermanded, they would uncover his face.

8. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.

9. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us; this is the Lord, we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

10. For in this mountain shall the hand of the Lord rest, and Moab shall be trodden

revelation in the knowledge of Christ," and "by his knowledge he shall justify many."

8. He will bestow, at this period, the influences of his Spirit more liberally; so that all who hear the gospel shall be made spiritually alive. They shall enjoy the consolations of the Spirit, in more abundant measure. The true religion and its adherents, shall be highly respected in the world; whereas, in every former period, they were more or less subject to reproach. In these blessings, he will give the church a foretaste of that happiness she will enjoy at the general resurrection, when this mortal shall put on immortality*; when the tears incident to this vale shall be for ever wiped away†, and the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their father‡. Be assured of the completion of this prophecy, because JEHOVAH hath spoken it; his power and faithfulness shall accomplish it.

9. At that period, the church shall joyfully sing, How wonderful are the dealings of our God with us! we claimed an interest in him, and laid hold of his promises, and now he will manifest their faithfulness in our deliverance. He is JEHOVAH, the self-existent and the covenant keeping God. As we endured past calamities with patience, looking for his help, we will be glad and rejoice in our present deliverance.

10. For the hand of JEHOVAH, uplifted in every period, to inflict punishment on his enemies, shall, at this period of the church, rest, after de-

* 1 Cor. xv. 54.

† The connection of this verse with the preceding, must lead the attentive reader to observe, that it is a description of the church in this world: and every expression here used, is applied elsewhere to the millennial church. The conversion of the Jews, at that period, is represented by a resurrection, Ezek. xxxvii. the conversion of the Gentiles, at the same period, is called life from the dead, Rom. xi. 15. the conversion of the church in general, is called, the first resurrection, Rev. xx. 6. It is said of the palm-bearing multitude, that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, Rev. vii. 17. and the best interpreters suppose they represent the members of the

millennial church. See Mede's *Clavis Apocalyptica*. At the same period, the martyrs of Jesus sit on thrones of judgment, Rev. xx. 4.; that is, the rulers and magistrates of the world, animated by the spirit of the martyrs of Jesus; of course religion must be more highly respected, than at any former period. All this does by no means contradict the apostle's explication of the passage, 1 Cor. xv. 54. because this liberal measure of the Spirit is a preparation for, and earnest of the general resurrection; so the apostle John, Rev. xx. 6. "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death shall have no power."

‡ Mat. xiii. 43.

stroying them utterly; all the enemies of the church shall be brought to contempt and punishment, as straw trodden down for the dunghil.

11. And JEHOVAH shall come into the midst of his enemies, and extend his hands on both sides for their destruction, as a swimmer spreadeth forth his hands to swim, so that none shall escape*; he will thus humble their pride, and deprive them of the spoils they had unrighteously acquired.

12. He will deprive thee of thy defence, O Babylon, though it seemed for a season an impregnable fortress. He will bring thy system of tyranny and idolatry to contempt, yea to destruction; yea to oblivion, as walls reduced to dust.

* Bishop Lowth observes on this passage, "I cannot conceive that the stretching out of the hands of a swimmer in swimming, can be any illustration of the action of God stretching out his hands over Moab to destroy it." But, with all deference to the learned prelate, I can hardly conceive any action so fit to illustrate a complete overthrow, as the motion of a swimmer's hands in swimming. Suppose an army drawn

up, and that a person stands opposite to the centre of the army, having hands sufficiently long, to extend to the extremity of each wing, and sufficiently strong to beat down every one he touches: Suppose this person enters the centre, extends his arms with the motion of a swimmer, to both sides, and so passes through them; he must bring every individual to the ground, be the army ever so deep.

down under him, even as straw is trodden down for the dunghil.

11. And he shall spread forth his hands in the midst of them, as he that swimmeth spreadeth forth his hands to swim; and he shall bring down their pride, together with the spoils of their hands.

12. And the fortress of the high fort of thy walls, shall he bring down, lay low, and bring to the ground, even to the dust.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN this chapter, the prophet continues the same subject. He lays before us a song of praise, to be sung by the Jews on their conversion and restoration; descriptive of their tranquillity and righteousness, as a nation, ver. 1,—4.; the destruction of their enemies, particularly of spiritual Babylon, ver. 5, 6.; their own improvement of God's instructions and corrections, ver. 7, 8, 9.; the refractoriness of God's enemies, and consequently the justice of their punishment, ver. 10, 11.; their own faith, repentance, and fervency in prayer, ver. 12,—16.; the failure of their former expectations of deliverance, ver. 19.; the certainty of their conversion at present, in order to their deliverance. An exhortation to patience, during the period that elapses betwixt their conversion, and their settlement in Judea, ver. 20, 21.

THE TEXT.

1. In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah : We have a strong city, salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks.

2. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.

3. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee ; because he trusteth in thee.

4. Trust ye in the Lord for ever ; for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.

5. For he bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty city he layeth it low, even to the ground ; he bringeth it even to the dust.

6. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy.

7. The way of the just is uprightness ; thou, most upright, dost weigh the path of the just.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. At that period, shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, when the Jews are restored to the knowledge of the Messiah, and the possession of their land : Firmly established is our civil and religious polity ; the knowledge of eternal salvation through the Messiah, is more to us than walls and bulwarks.

2. Open ye the gates of the church, that the nation now submitting to the righteousness of the Messiah *, and purified to the obedience of the truth, may enter in.

3. Thou, Lord, wilt bestow on them peace temporal and spiritual ; for they are turned away from all reliance on idols and an arm of flesh, to put their confidence in thee †.

4. Put your confidence, O ye people, in JEHOVAH ; for as his name is, so is his power ; he is the self-existent, and his strength is everlasting.

5. For he hath humbled the proud usurper of his rights, and those that supported him, the system of idolatry and tyranny maintained by Babylon, he hath brought to contempt, to exceeding great contempt ; yea to destruction, even to oblivion.

6. It shall be held under subjection by the true members of thy church, though they are humble in themselves, and despised by the world.

7. The way of thy faithful servants, set free from the snares of Babylon's tyranny, is directed by uprightness on either hand ‡. O thou righteous Sovereign of the universe, in directing the way of thy servants, thou weighest every event of thy providence as in a balance, ordering all with unerring wisdom ; so that, though thy people may be oppressed for a season, and wickedness may prevail, yet thou wilt in thy time send deliverance

* See Rom. x. 3, 4. where the apostle shews the cause of rejecting the Jewish nation, to be, their not submitting to the righteousness of Christ. Compare it with Rev. xix. 8. ; where the apostle intimates their reception into the church ; they are invested with " the righteousness of saints," name-

ly, that righteousness to which they did not formerly submit.

† See how conformable this is to the language which Hosea puts into the mouth of the converted Jews, chap. xiv. ver. 2. 3.

‡ The word in the original is, uprightness.

to them, and cause truth and righteousness to triumph.

8. This we have experienced, for we have submitted to thy chastisements, and looked to thy hand for deliverance; it has been the ardent desire of our souls, to have an interest in the covenant, founded on thy unchangeable perfections. It has been our joy to contemplate the deliverances afforded our fathers.

9. Each for himself may now appeal to thee: "I have made choice of thee, in preference to every worldly advantage; with my soul have I sought thee in the night, when others seek their rest or their pleasure; yea I will seek thee sincerely and ardently in the morning, when others return with eagerness to the world: We know that the design of thy judgments, when most severe and extensive, is gracious; they are intended to teach the inhabitants of the world righteousness, in order to their happiness."

10. But how incorrigible and inexcusable are wicked men, who will not profit by thy instructions! If favour is shewed to any of these, by merciful dispensations of divine providence, his heart is not softened to obedience as it ought. In the land where the knowledge and example of uprightness is set before him, he will deal unjustly; nor is he conscious of the hand of God in his dispensations.

11. If again he is chastised by afflicting dispensations of providence, he is not conscious of thy hand, O JEHOVAH, in these afflictions; therefore, by severe punishments shall they be confounded, and made sensible of thy jealousy over thy people; yea the fire provided for the destruction of thine enemies shall devour them.

12. Thou, JEHOVAH, wilt order events, so as to establish us in peace; for thou hast performed all our mighty deeds for us, as in former ages.

13. O JEHOVAH our God, though once under thy guidance and protection, we sinned against thee, and thou didst deliver us over to the dominion of other masters who ruled us with severity, and detained us in hard bondage; but henceforth it is our resolution to be devoted to thy service.

8. Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee.

9. With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me, will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.

10. Let favour be shewed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.

11. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea, the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.

12. Lord, thou wilt ordain peace for us; for thou also hast wrought all our works in us.

13. O Lord our God, other lords besides thee have had dominion over us; but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.

14. They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

15. Thou hast increased the nation, O Lord, thou hast increased the nation: thou art glorified; thou hast removed it far unto all the ends of the earth.

16. Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer, when thy chastening was upon them.

17. Like as a woman with child, that draweth near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs; so have we been in thy sight, O Lord.

18. We have been with child, we have been in pain, we have as it were brought forth wind; we have not wrought any deliverance in the earth; neither have the inhabitants of the earth fallen.

14. These masters are dead, they shall not live again; these tyrants are deceased, they shall not rise to oppress any more; thou hast rendered to them their deserts, thou hast destroyed them; and hast caused all their power and influence to perish.

15. Thou hast increased the nation, O JEHOVAH, thou hast increased them, and gathered them together; thy power and faithfulness are conspicuous in this event; for thou hadst previously dispersed them far, through all the regions of the earth*.

16. O JEHOVAH, in our trouble have we sought thee, when thy chastening was upon us†, we poured out our humble supplications to thee.

17. But hitherto, though ardent, they have been unavailing to procure deliverance; as a woman apparently with child, and drawing near the time of her delivery, is in pain, and crieth out in her pangs, yet in the issue produces no birth‡.

18. So we have imagined our deliverance near, our afflictions have been great, our prayers ardent, but our expectations have been disappointed; we obtained no deliverance, nor did the men of this world, that were enemies to thy glory and to us, fall.

* "Thou hast extended far all the borders of the land," Bishop Lowth. It must be acknowledged that the words in the original may be so translated, and it appears likewise from the prophecies, that the Jews, after their return from their present dispersion, shall possess their land more extensively than at any former period. However, I have retained our common translation, as it conveys a very natural sense. In thanksgiving, they mention distress from which they were delivered. So David, Psalm xviii. and Psalm cxvi. "the sorrows of death," &c.

† Bishop Lowth, with much probability, supposes that the verbs and pronouns should be in the first person plural, not the third.

They are so in the Septuagint; but if we follow our own common translation, the sense is the same.

‡ The learned professor Michaelis, explains this image in the following manner: *Rariorem morbum describi, empneumatosis, aut ventosum molam, dictum; quo quæ laborant diu et sibi et peritis medicis gravida videntur, tandemque post omnes veræ graviditatis molestias et labores ventum ex utero emittunt; quem morbum possum describunt medici.* Syntagma Com. vol. ii. p. 165. The Syriac translator seems to have understood it in this manner: *Enixi sumus, ut illæ quæ ventos pariunt.*

Bishop Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, p. 146.

19. But now thou hast said to us, your expectation shall be established; the people of your nation, for a long time spiritually dead, shall be revived; in consequence of my covenant relation * to them, they shall be restored to my favour. Awake and sing ye who were spiritually dead, in as helpless a condition as those who dwell in the grave; your nation shall be converted in a collected body. Divine grace descending in abundance, and on the multitude, as the dew upon the grass, your conversion shall be effected powerfully and instantaneously, as when the earth, at the general resurrection shall cast forth the dead †.

20. But in regard, a period of trial will follow the accomplishment of this prophecy, and precedes your settlement in the promised land ‡; I exhort you, my people, to exercise patience, and to be fervent in secret prayer, and to avoid mingling in the broils of the world, until the chastisement inflicted in my just anger shall be at an end; remembering that the period of trial is short, when compared with the duration of the happiness that follows after, but especially with an endless eternity ||.

21. Being assured that JEHOVAH will, in due time, manifest his power, in punishing the men of this world § for their iniquity; to the justice of which, the earth shall bear witness, that drunk the blood of his servants at their hand, which it

19. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs; and the earth shall cast out the dead.

20. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

21. For behold the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood,

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† This image is pursued extensively, Ezek. chap. xxxvii.; and if the circumstances there narrated are attended to, they will justify the illustration in the paraphrase.

‡ The period that elapses betwixt the conversion of the Jews and their possession of Judea, appears to be forty years; during which period, they shall be tried and

chastised, as their fathers were tried in the wilderness. See Key to the prophecies, Part III. chap. iv. sec. 5.

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§ At the close of the forty years trial, all the powerful enemies of religion then on earth shall be subdued, and destroyed at Armageddon.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet continues the same subject, describing the times that immediately precede the millennium. That this is the period to which the prophecy points, appears,

1. From its being connected with the preceding by these expressions, "in that day."
2. From its concluding with an account of the return of the Jews from their great dispersion.

He describes the particular enemies of religion, that shall then be vanquished and destroyed, ver. 1.; the happiness of the church under God's protection, ver. 2, 3.; and a caution against the misapplication of his grace, ver. 4, 5.; a promise that the church shall extend over all the earth, ver. 6.; an objection taken from the calamities of the church, answered, by shewing that the love of God was manifest, both in the manner and end of those calamities, ver. 7, 8, 9.; the utter desolation of spiritual Babylon, ver. 10, 11.; the gathering of the Jews from their dispersion, and resettling them in Judea, ver. 12, 13.

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THE PARAPHRASE.

1. In that day the Lord, with his fore, and great, and strong sword, shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.

1. At that time, JEHOVAH shall, with power, severity and justice, render to the enemies of his church their desert; particularly, he will punish the beast and false prophet, and destroy the influence of Satan, that he may deceive the nations no more*.

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20. But in regard, a period of trial will follow the accomplishment of this prophecy, and precedes your settlement in the promised land ‡; I exhort you, my people, to exercise patience, and to be fervent in secret prayer, and to avoid mingling in the broils of the world, until the chastisement inflicted in my just anger shall be at an end; remembering that the period of trial is short, when compared with the duration of the happiness that follows after, but especially with an endless eternity ||.

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2. At that time, sing ye to the church, which is my beloved vineyard, this song*.

3. It is JEHOVAH that preserves her; I will water her every moment with the influences of my Spirit; I will keep her by my providence, from sustaining damage, either in the night of adversity, or in the day of prosperity.

4. Though I might justly have displayed mine anger in her destruction, it is my resolution to shew mercy in her salvation. But let not impatient sinners infer from this, that they shall escape with impunity. They may be fully compared to briers and thorns, that pierce the hand which plants and waters them; they resist the means of grace, and retain the weapons of rebellion against me in their hands. Therefore will I subdue them together.

5. Yet if any of these by true repentance submit to me, and by faith take hold of him who is

2. In that day sing ye unto her, A vineyard of red wine.

3. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.

4. Fury is not in me, who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle; I would go through them; I would burn them together.

5. Or let him take hold of my strength,

mediately preceding the millennium, we learn from the Apocalypse, who these enemies are; when the sixth vial is poured out, *i. e.* as I suppose, the Jews are converted, three enemies of religion collect forces, to oppose the truth, and resist the settlement of the Jews, namely the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, Rev. xvi. ver. 13. The conquest of these three enemies is expressly mentioned; "the beast and false prophet were cast alive into the lake of fire," Rev. xix. ver. 20. "the dragon is bound, and cast into the bottomless pit," Rev. xx. ver. 1, 2, 3. All the empires that have persecuted the church, are represented in Scripture, by wild ravenous beasts; as Dan. chap. vii. Rev. chap. xiii. so here by leviathan. This appellation seems to have a reference to the description of that animal, in the book of Job, some part of which exactly agrees with the description of the apocalyptic beast, and of the power intended by that beast. Compare Job xli. 8. 10. 25. 29. "Lay thine hand upon him, remember the battle, do no more; none is so fierce that dare stir him up," &c.; with Rev. xiii. ver. 4. "who is like unto the beast; who is able to make war with him?" and Job xli. ver. 34. "he is a king over all the children of pride," with 2 Thess. ii. 4. "he opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped." The false prophet,

who is the same with the second beast, described Rev. chap. xiii. ver. 11. 17. on account of his similarity in office and temper to the first beast, may be fully termed leviathan likewise; for he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, ver. 12. Yet there is a characteristic difference betwixt the two beasts; that of the first is pride and fierceness; that of the second, subtilty and cunning, Rev. xiii. ver. 14. He deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by the means of those miracles, v. 9. he had power to do. So here the first leviathan is called the piercing, *i. e.* fierce or strong serpent; the second is called the crooked, *i. e.* the subtle, deceitful serpent. The dragon here, as in the Apocalypse, represents Satan in allusion to the instrument by which he deceived our first parents. The sea, or waters, represent people, multitudes, nations and tongues, Rev. chap. xiii. ver. 15. over whom Satan as the god of this world ruleth, till the period of his confinement come.

* Bishop Lowth supposes this to be a responsive song, in which JEHOVAH and the church sing alternate stanzas, as in the Song of Solomon; but that supposition requires a greater change of the expressions than can be established by proper authority.

that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me.

6. He shall cause them that come of Jacob to take root; Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit.

7. Hath he smitten him, as he smote those that smote him? or is he slain, according to the slaughter of them that are slain by him?

8. In measure when it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it; he stayeth his rough wind, in the day of the east wind.

9. By this therefore shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged; and this is all the fruit to take away his sin;

my power unto salvation *, in order to his reconciliation with me, he shall succeed; being justified by faith, he shall have peace with me †.

6. This song shall be sung extensively, as joyfully; for JEHOVAH shall cause the church to be diffused over all nations, like a tree which taketh root downward, and so being firmly established, spreadeth its branches upward, bearing buds and blossoms, and filling the face of the world with fruit.

7. But to these promises of mercy some may object, That if God had so tender a regard to his church and people, he would not have delivered them over, (as he has frequently done) into the hand of their persecutors, who treated them cruelly. In answer to that objection, I would ask those who make it, Is there no difference betwixt the punishment inflicted on his people, and that inflicted on their persecutors? Have not his people in every affliction been preserved? Have not their persecutors been wholly consumed ‡?

8. O Lord, thou dost moderate the stroke of affliction, when thou sendest it, according to the strength of thy people to bear it; for thou knowest their frame, thou rememberest that they are dust ||. Thou pleadest with them, as a tender-hearted parent with his child; that they may submit and spare thee the pain of inflicting another stroke; for thou afflictest not willingly §. God always mingles mercy with the judgment he inflicteth on his people; considering them as a delicate bud, he will not permit the rough wind, and the blasting east wind, to blow together.

9. Further, God chastens his people for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness *, the whole design of chastisement is to subdue the power of sin in them. As the hardest limestones,

* 1 Cor. i. 24.

† Rom. v. 1.

‡ With what force of truth is this appeal made! where are now Gebal, Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines and the inhabitants of Tyre? whereas the Jews yet exist. Where at this day are the Romans, the great persecutors of the New Testament church? What availed the wisdom of their

senate, the prowess of their arms, the glory of their conquests, the boast of an eternal duration to their empire? In defiance of all they are extinct; while the persecuted church of Christ remains.

|| Psal. ciii. 14.

§ Lam. iii. 33.

* Heb. xii. 10.

by the force of fire, are reduced to dust; so the hearts of his people, being softened in the furnace of affliction, they are induced to break down the altars, and reject the idols which they formerly served.

10, 11. But while God thus deals in lenity with his church, he will utterly destroy her persecutors; for spiritual Babylon*, though defended by human policy and satan's wiles, shall he like a desolate city, deprived of its inhabitants, and left like a wilderness. Her ordinances, once crowded with people, shall be deserted like the streets of a desolate city covered with grass, so that the bullock shall feed there, for the abundance of pasture, he shall lie down there, and browse on the crops of it. As the branches of a tree cut down, when withered and scattered on the ground, are gathered by women, and set on fire, so all her bulwarks shall be destroyed; for her inhabitants neither receive instruction nor understand correction; therefore God, though he hath a regard to the work of his own hands, will neither pity nor spare them.

12. At that period, JEHOVAH shall separate you, O ye children of Israel, from the nations among whom ye sojourn, as corn is separated from the straw by threshing; this separation shall take place chiefly from the Euphrates to the Nile, and ye shall be gathered together every one.

* Most commentators apply this passage to Jerusalem and the Jews, but I have applied it to spiritual Babylon, for the following reasons: 1st, It appears to me more consistent with the scope of the prophet's discourse; he had put a question, ver. 7. Is there no difference betwixt the punishment inflicted on God's people, and that inflicted on their persecutors? He illustrates one side of the question, in the two following verses, by shewing the manner in which God punishes his own people. He now illustrates the other side of the question, by shewing how God punisheth persecutors. 2d, In every song of thanksgiving, to be

when he maketh all the stones of the altar as chalk stones that are beaten in sunder; the groves and images shall not stand up.

10. Yet the defended city shall be desolate, and the habitation forsaken, and left like a wilderness; there shall the calf feed, and there shall he lie down, and consume the branches thereof.

11. When the boughs thereof are withered, they shall be broken off; the women come and set them on fire; for it is a people of no understanding; therefore, he that made them, will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them, will shew them no favour.

12. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall beat off from the channel of the river, unto the stream of Egypt, and ye shall be gathered one by one, O ye children of Israel.

used at the period to which the prophecy points, the destruction of spiritual Babylon is introduced, as the distinguishing mercy of the times; so chap. xxv. ver. 2. and ver. 12. and chap. xxvi. ver. 5. It is highly probable, therefore, when another song is laid before us, belonging to the same time, that the same subject should be introduced. 3d, The following verses represent the return of the Jews from their great dispersion, and that event is connected with this passage, by these expressions, "in that day;" now the destruction of spiritual Babylon is coeval with the return of the Jews, but the desolation of Jerusalem is not.

13. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish, in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem.

13. And, at that period, the gospel shall be successfully preached to you, and so the great event, prefigured by the jubilee, shall be accomplished. Ye who were ready to perish in the wilderness of Assyria, and were outcasts from the land of Egypt*, shall, as members of the church, be restored to the favour of God, and to the possession of the promised land.

* See Key to the Prophecies, Part iii. chap. xv. sect. 3.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet represents the sin and punishment of the kingdom of Israel, under the name of Ephraim, the chief tribe of that kingdom; a punishment which was inflicted by Salmanezer, king of Assyria, ver. 1,—4. He promises that the presence and protection of God, should be with the kingdom of Judah, at the time the punishment threatened should be inflicted on Israel: a promise verified by the good government of Hezekiah, ver. 5, 6.

From ver. 7. to ver. 23. he treats of the sin and punishment of the Jews, or the remaining two tribes. Some have supposed, that the punishment threatened was fulfilled by Senacherib's invasion; but the circumstances described can by no means apply to that period. I apprehend that the Spirit of prophecy points to the latter days of the Jewish state, and to the Roman invasion. My reasons are these: 1st, God charges them with being incorrigible under every possible means of instruction, ver. 9,—13. But the last and most powerful means of instruction, was the ministry of Christ and his apostles; the charge, therefore, must lie against the generation who heard them. 2d, Two verses of this passage are quoted in the New Testament, and expressly applied to the time of our Saviour, and his apostles; ver. 11. is applied by the apostle Paul, to the gift of tongues, 1 Cor. xiv. 21. and ver. 16. is explained of the kingdom of Christ, which should be established, in defiance of the Jews that rejected him, Eph. ii. 20. and 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5. From the connection, the other verses of the passage must refer to the same times; the Spirit of God being the best interpreter of his own meaning. 3d, The invasion of the Romans actually issued in a consumption of the whole land, ver. 22. whereas the invasion of Senacherib ended in his defeat, and the deliverance of the land.

From ver. 23. to the close, we have an allegory, intended, as is generally supposed, to represent the justice of God, in the conduct of his providence, particularly in inflicting punishments. I apprehend it is rather a vindication of the dealings of his grace, particularly of his abrogating the Mosaic dispensation, and establishing that of the gospel; so it forms an answer to the great objection, which he foresaw the Jews would have to the Messiah; and thus it is connected with the preceding part of the chapter, where he mentions their rejecting the Messiah, and their consequent punishment by the Romans.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. I denounce vengeance, in the name of God, against the ten tribes of Israel, and particularly against the Ephraimites, for their pride and their drunkenness. The fertility of their lands, abounding with corn and wine, they have perverted to the purposes of intemperance; therefore their residence in it, and all the advantages wherein they place their glory, and which render them beautiful in the esteem of others, shall pass away like a fading flower; for they are wholly under the influence of intemperance.

2. Behold JEHOVAH hath prepared a mighty and strong one to execute his vengeance, the king of Assyria; whose army, like a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, and a flood of mighty waters overflowing the land, and carrying down every thing in its course, shall subdue or destroy all, and carry off the remnant into captivity. He shall as easily overcome the Ephraimites, notwithstanding their boasted valour, as a strong man casteth down an infant with his hand to the earth.

3. Then shall the respectability of the intemperate Ephraimites, the source of their pride, be treated with contempt.

* Some suppose that the term *crown*, refers to that worn at their banquets, others to the situation of Samaria, which was situated in the tribe of Ephraim. I consider it rather as a Hebraism, expressive of respectability; which the Ephraimites certainly had among the other tribes: so *crown of glory* signifies, that respectability which God would put on the remaining

THE TEXT.

1. Woe to the crown * of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which are on the head of the fat vallies of them that are overcome with wine.

2. Behold the Lord hath a mighty and strong one, which, as a tempest of hail, and a destroying storm, as a flood of mighty waters overflowing, shall cast down to the earth with the hand.

3. The crown of pride, and the drunkenness of Ephraim, shall be trodden under foot.

two tribes. See similar expressions, chap. lxii. ver. 3. "Thou shalt be a *crown* of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." The pride of the Ephraimites was intolerable, in consequence of their respectability, as appears from the history of Gideon and Jephtha.

4. And the glorious beauty, which is on the head of the fat valley, shall be a fading flower; and as the hasty fruit before the summer, which when he that looketh upon it seeth, while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up.

5. In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people.

6. And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate.

7. But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way, the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment.

8. For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.

9. Whom shall he teach knowledge, and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

4. And the advantages wherein they place their glory, and which render them respectable in the esteem of others, together with their residence in a fertile country, shall pass away like a fading flower*. They and their substance shall be suddenly and eagerly devoured by the Assyrians, as the first ripe fruit is hastily snatched and greedily swallowed up by the person who sees it.

5. At that time shall JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, prove the defence and the glory of the remaining two tribes, the kingdom of Judah; so as to make them respectable and beautiful, in the esteem of all that surround them.

6. He will bestow his Spirit on the various members of the community, according to their several departments. He will give wisdom and integrity to the rulers, courage and success to the soldiers, so that they shall chase the enemy to their gates.

7. But I foresee, that in after ages they also shall be infected with the vices of their brethren the Israelites; they shall wander from the way of their duty and of their happiness, through intemperance; their priests and their prophets, who ought to be exemplary in their conduct, shall be wholly addicted to drunkenness; by it they shall be rendered unfit for their several offices. The prophets shall deliver false messages, which they pretend to receive from God, and the priests shall pervert judgment.

8. I see intemperance universally prevailing; persons of all ranks and conditions are infected by it.

9. Is this their degeneracy owing to their wanting the means of instruction? Does it proceed from any neglect on God's part? Surely not. What could have been done to his vineyard, that he hath not done†? It is owing to their own unwillingness and incapacity. They are as unqualified to acquire a knowledge of divine things, and

* The punishment here threatened, is frequently the natural consequence of the sin reprehended. All the accomplishments of body and mind, a good name and good morals, as well as outward affluence; in a word, all the advantages that adorn human

nature, are destroyed by intemperance; as the most beautiful flower is withered by the blasting wind or nipping frost, God having wisely appointed, that sin should be its own punishment.

† Chap. v.

to attain the end God has in view, by communicating that knowledge, as children newly weaned are to acquire a knowledge of the sciences.

10. But God has graciously dealt with them, as a knowing affectionate parent deals with dull and obstinate children; he has given them plain instructions, suited to their capacity; few at a time to prevent their being tiresome; he has repeated them often, to refresh their memory. He has varied his manner of instruction, to render his precepts more agreeable; communicating knowledge now by his word, again by his providence; at one time by the ordinary ministers of the sanctuary, at another time by prophets extraordinarily commissioned.

11. Though all these means have proved unsuccessful, God shall send, at a future period, messengers endowed with the gift of speaking foreign languages*; thus carrying an evidence of their divine commission, in their manner of delivering their message.

12. The message then delivered shall be full of consolation, offering a perfect and eternal rest to the souls of those who receive it; and pointing out the Messiah, at all times the hope of Israel, as the person in whom this rest is to be found. But these instructions shall be rejected, as well as those that preceded.

13. Shall then the pains and patience of God in instructing them, produce no fruit to his glory? They certainly shall. If they do not glorify his mercy, they shall glorify his justice. Though they do not issue in the salvation of an obstinate people, they shall vindicate the justice of divine providence in their punishment. These instructions rejected, shall be followed by grievous calamities, which will not only occasion a decline of their honour and happiness, but likewise put an end to their civil and religious polity.

14. I have received a message to the rulers of Jerusalem, at that period: Attend diligently to

10. For precept must be on precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little.

11. For with flaming lips, and another tongue, will he speak to this people.

12. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing, yet they would not hear.

13. But the word of the Lord was unto them, precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little; that they might go and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

14. Wherefore, hear the word of the Lord, ye scornful men that

* Interpreters commonly apply this passage, to the chastisement of a foreign enemy. But the apostle's interpretation, 1 Cor. xiv. 21. agrees best with the message deli-

vered. The sum of the apostle's preaching was conformable to that of our Lord, Mat. xi. 28.

le this people, which
in Jerusalem.

15. Because ye have
id, We have made
covenant with death,
and with hell are we at
reement; when the
overflowing scourge
shall pass through, it
shall not come unto
us; for we have made
our refuge, and
under falsehood have
we hid ourselves.

16. Therefore thus
saith the Lord God,
Behold, I lay in Zion
a foundation, a
stone, a tried stone, a
precious corner-stone,
a sure foundation; he
that believeth shall
not make haste.

17. Judgment also
will I lay to the line,
and righteousness to
the plummet; and the
hail shall sweep away
the refuge of lies, and
the waters shall over-
flow the hiding place.

18. And your cove-
nant with death shall
be disannulled, and
your agreement with
hell shall not stand;
when the overflowing
scourge shall pass
through, then ye shall
be trodden down by

the word of JEHOVAH, ye who have scornfully re-
jected the offered salvation, and despised the threat-
ened punishment.

15. Ye fondly flatter yourselves, that you are
in league with the great destroyers * of the human
race, so that though they prove a scourge to all
other nations, they will not hurt you; but the is-
sue will shew, that your political refinement has
led you to a false ground of hope, and your league
with these allies shall disappoint your expecta-
tions.

16. And whereas ye have rejected the Messiah,
for fear of offending these destroyers, thus saith
JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, I will make him
the foundation of that spiritual building, in which
I will dwell; he shall be head over all things to
the church. He shall be well qualified for that
office, by his nature and his sufferings; he shall
be precious in the esteem of those that believe on
him, and a firm foundation of hope to those that
rely on him; and such will patiently wait for
him, not hastily grasping at present pleasures; not
hastily avoiding present troubles †.

17. As builders cast away the stones which
they cannot get to square with the foundation, by
line and plummet, so will I deal with you. As ye
will not receive the Messiah, nor submit to his
rules, ye shall be thrust out from being members
of his church: I will further by war, like a storm
of hail, or an overflowing flood, carry away the
advantages you expected to reap from your league
with the destroyers, whose friendship you prefer-
red to his.

18. Your league with these destroyers shall be
broken, your alliance with them shall not always
continue; and when it is broken, their conquests,
by which other nations have been scourged, spread-
ing over them as an inundation, shall extend to
you. And ye shall be utterly subdued by them.

* Namely, the Romans.

† I have endeavoured to unite the sense

given here, and in the New Testament,
1 Pet. ii. 6.

19. From the time that they attack the remote skirts of the land, the report of their victories and cruelties, daily increasing, and gradually approaching, shall consume with terror and vexation, the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

20. While every effort made for their defence, shall only increase the misery of their condition; as if a person excessively tired, should lay himself down in a bed too short to stretch himself in; or as if a person shivering with cold, should lay himself down with a covering, too narrow to wrap himself in it.

21. The hand of JEHOVAH shall appear remarkably in their punishment, as formerly in the subduing of the Philistines, in mount Perazim*, and in the slaughter of the Ammonites, in the valley of Gibeon†. This punishment, executed on a people once dear to God, may appear strange and inconsistent with his love and mercy; yet it is the work of JEHOVAH, and necessary for wise ends.

22. As the best improvement of the punishment foretold, let me exhort you who revere the divine authority, not to join in the sentiments of those who despise the offered mercy, and the threatened judgment, lest your punishment be grievous: for JEHOVAH the sovereign Ruler hath assured me, that the bulk of the nation shall be involved in it; so that the whole land shall be consumed and left desolate.

23. I am aware it will be objected that the punishment is too severe, because the Jewish nation and their rulers had at least a plausible pretence for rejecting the Messiah; he and his followers having abrogated the Mosaic œconomy. Now, does it appear consistent with the divine wisdom, first to have established that œconomy with the most striking demonstrations of his presence and approbation, and afterwards to have removed it? In answer to that objection, attend to the allegory I offer: Weigh maturely its meaning and tendency.

19. From the time that it goeth forth, it shall take you; for morning by morning shall it pass over, by day and by night; and it shall be a vexation only to understand the report.

20. For the bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it; and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.

21. For the Lord shall rise up as in mount Perazim, he shall be wroth, as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may do his work, his strange work; and bring to pass his act, his strange act.

22. Now therefore, be ye not mockers, lest your hands be made strong; for I have heard from the Lord God of hosts a consumption, even determined upon the whole earth.

23. Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech.

* 2 Sam. v. 20.

† Joshua x. 12.

24. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground?

24. Does the husbandman continue to plow the whole year round? Is it his sole employment to break up his ground? Surely not; for having sufficiently plowed his land, he proceeds to sow; an operation equally necessary in its season, in order to procure a plentiful harvest. Just so, an infinitely wise God, in the management of his husbandry the church, gave the law as a preparation, afterwards removed it, in order to sow the word of his grace by the gospel; which is the great means of procuring eternal glory to his people.

25. When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place?

25. Again, does not the husbandman accommodate the kind of grain to the nature of the soil; and the quantity of grain sowed, to the measure of his soil.

26. For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him.

26. If the hand of God is acknowledged, in thus giving the husbandman a knowledge of the several kinds of grain, and the different sorts of soil; if the judgment of the husbandman is manifest in the application of that knowledge, ought not the wisdom of God to be acknowledged in pointing the mode of instruction, or the dispensation of his grace, to the capacities of his people? If so, is not the wisdom of God evident, in bestowing the law on the church in her nonage, in removing that law, and giving the gospel in her mature age?

27. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod.

27. Further, the husbandman adapts the threshing instrument, to the nature of the grain to be threshed. Thus, he threshes out the stronger kinds of grain, by the drag-cart; the more delicate kinds of grain, which would be readily hurt by the drag-cart, he threshes out by a staff, and a rod*. Thus, varying the instrument according

* "Four methods of threshing are here mentioned, by different instruments; the flail, the drag, the wain, and the treading of the cattle. The staff or flail was used for the *infirmiora semina* (says Hieron) the grain that was too tender to be treated in the other methods. The drag consisted of a sort of frame of strong planks, made rough at the bottom, with hard stones or iron; it

was drawn by horses or oxen over the corn sheaves spread on the floor, the driver sitting upon it. Kempfer has given a print, representing the manner of using this instrument. Amoen. Exot. p. 682. fig. 3. The wain was much like the former, but had wheels with iron teeth, or edges like a saw. "Ferrata carpenta rotis per medium in ferrarum modum se volventibus." Hieron in locum: by

to circumstances, is not the effect of folly or fickleness, but the result of wisdom, and of the special care which the husbandman has for the fruit of his labour: Just so, varying the manner of dispensing his grace according to circumstances, is the dictate of that love and wisdom which God displays in all his conduct to his church.

28. Finally, when the husbandman prepares his corn for bread, he uses an instrument to bruise it; he rejects every kind of threshing instrument as unfit for this purpose, in this more advanced state of his labour. And this must be considered as proceeding from that wisdom which God has bestowed upon him.

28. Bread corn is bruised, because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen.

29. Now, that God in a more advanced period of his church, after she had made a progress in divine knowledge, should reject the ministry of the law, and establish that of the gospel, ought to be considered as an evidence of that divine wisdom which is wonderful in expedients, and of that almighty power which is excellent in the application of them.

29. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.

which it should seem, that the axle was armed with iron teeth, or serrated wheels, throughout. See a description and print of such a machine used at present in Egypt, for the same purpose; it moves upon three-rollers, armed with iron teeth or wheels, to cut the straw; in Niebuhr's *Voyage en Arabie*, Tab. xvii. p. 123. In Syria they make use of the drag, constructed in the very same manner as above described. Nie-

buhr, *Descrip. de l'Arabie*, p. 140. This not only forced out the grain, but cut the straw in pieces for fodder for the cattle; for in the eastern countries they have no hay. See Harmer's *Observ.* i. p. 425. The last method is well known from the law of Moses, which "forbids the ox to be muzzled when he treadeth out the corn." Deut. xxv. 4. Lowth's Translation of Isaiah in loc.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE application of the former part of this chapter to Sennacherib's invasion, must be erroneous; you will find a most explicit refutation of it, by comparing ver. 3. "I will lay siege against thee with a *mount*, and I will raise forts against thee;" with chap. xxxvii. ver. 33. "Therefore, thus saith the Lord, concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor cast a *bank* against it."

That from the beginning to ver. 19. the spirit of prophecy has a special eye to the latter days of the Jewish state; that is, to the Roman invasion, and the sins that occasioned it; appears to me from the following peculiarities in the description: 1st, Jerusalem is termed Ariel, the hearth of the altar, on account of the great slaughter of its inhabitants; but never was slaughter so great as that occasioned by the Roman arms; as we learn, not only from the testimony of Josephus, who was an eye witness of it, but likewise from a higher authority, that of our Lord, who, speaking of that event, says, "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not seen since the beginning of the world to this time, no nor ever shall be; and except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved," Mat. xxiv. 21, 22.

2d, Our Saviour seems to have the 6th verse of this chapter in his eye, when mentioning the events that prognosticated the siege of the city by the Romans, Mat. xx. 6.

3d, Ver. 10. is quoted and applied by the apostle Paul to the Jews of his own time, Rom. xi. 8.

4th, Ver. 11. and 12. are similar expressions, and have the same meaning with chap. viii. 16. which we have seen are applicable to the Jews in our Saviour's time.

5th, Ver. 13. is expressly applied by our Lord himself, to the Jews of his own time. The whole of these circumstances, taken together, leave no room for a moment's hesitation, respecting the literal meaning of the passage.

The prophet represents the punishment of the Jews by the Romans, ver. 1,—6. The continuance of the punishment upon the Jews, represented by the insatiable thirst of the nations for their blood, ver. 7, 8. The sins which should occasion these severe punishments, ver. 9,—16. The rejection of the Jews, and the call of the Gentiles, ver. 17. The power and progress of the gospel, ver. 18, 19. The fall of Antichrist in the latter days, ver. 20, 21. The conversion and restoration of the Jews, coeval with that event, ver. 22,—24. The last part is introduced, as the issue of the punishment threatened in the former part of the chapter.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt: add ye year to year: let them kill sacrifices.

1. I denounce vengeance against Jerusalem, and at the time that vengeance shall be executed, it may be fully termed, the hearth of the altar*, even the hearth of the altar, though it is the city where David dwelt, and where he established the ark of the covenant; though ye the inhabitants

* Whether the word be compounded of *ar* the altar, and its consumption of flesh, is *je el lion*, the lion of God, as in the margin, or of *ur el*, the fire of God, doubtless what the prophet has in view.

continue to attend the yearly festivals, and to perform the daily sacrifices within it.

2. Yet I, saith JEHOVAH, will distress thee, O Jerusalem, to that degree, that thou shalt resemble the hearth of the altar *; instead of the joy of thy solemn festivals, there shall be heard in thee, mourning and sorrow. The city shall consume its inhabitants, an offering to my justice, as the hearth of the altar consumes the sacrifice.

3. I, who have the hearts of all men in mine hand, will bring enemies who shall surround thee, and carry on a siege against thee, using the several arts commonly practised, to take strong cities.

4. By the length of the siege, and the sack that follows it, thy pride shall be abased, thy power shall be broken, of thine inhabitants thou shalt be deprived: so that thy voice, which was loud in thy solemn feasts, shall be low, more feeble than any human voice; it shall resemble that of a necromancer, which seems to whisper out of the ground.

5. Thy inhabitants †, though numerous and proud ‡, shall be trodden under foot by their enemies, as the small dust; though formidable, as well as numerous, they shall be as easily and effectually vanquished by their enemies, as the chaff is driven away of the wind; the destruction threatened shall come upon them unexpectedly.

6. The hand of JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, shall be manifest in thy punishment, O Jerusalem; and as tokens of the approaching judgment, fearful sights and great signs shall then be from heaven ||; there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places §, and the issue of all is, that thou shalt be consumed with fire.

7. And the several nations that fight against Jerusalem, after they have distressed her, spoiled her

2. Yet I will distress Ariel, and there shall be heaviness and sorrow: and it shall be unto me as Ariel.

3. And I will carry against thee round about, and will lay siege against thee with a mount, and I will raise forts against thee.

4. And thou shalt be brought down, and shalt speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.

5. Moreover the multitude of thy strangers shall be like small dust, and the multitude of the terrible ones shall be as chaff that passeth away; yea, it shall be at an instant, suddenly.

6. Thou shalt be visited of the Lord of hosts, with thunder, and with earthquake, and great noise, with storm and tempest, and the flame of devouring fire.

7. And the multitude of all the nations

* אֶרֶץ אֶרֶץ, to Ariel will I straiten thee, literally.

† Several interpreters apply this verse to the enemies of Jerusalem; but that interpretation is inconsistent with the scope and connection of the prophet's discourse. The verses before and after apply to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so ought this. Again,

the expression, thy strength, or, thy proud ones, as it should be rendered, is obviously more applicable to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, than to her enemies.

‡ Instead of אֶרֶץ, read אֶרֶץ, the א is frequently put for א, being so like it.

|| Luke xxi. 11.

§ Mat. xxiv. 7.

at fight against A-
el, even all that fight
against her and her
munition, and that dis-
tress her, shall be as
a dream of a night
vision.

8. It shall be even
as when a hungry man
dreameth, and behold
he eateth; but he awaketh,
and his soul is
empty: or as when
a thirsty man dream-
eth, and behold he
drinketh; but he awaketh,
and behold he is
faint, and his soul
has appetite: so shall
the multitude of all
the nations be that
fight against mount
Sion.

9. Stay yourselves
and wonder; cry ye
out, and cry: they are
drunken, but not with
wine; they stagger, but
not with strong drink.

10. For the Lord
hath poured out upon
you the spirit of deep
sleep, and hath closed
your eyes: the pro-

of her defence, and made her like the hearth of
the altar, by the multitude slain in her; instead of
being glutted with vengeance, and extending the
hand of mercy, they shall be prompted as with an
insatiable desire to commit yet further injuries on
her remaining inhabitants.

8. Just as a person, hungry and thirsty in his
sleep, eats and drinks, but when he awakes, he
finds his appetite unsatisfied, and rendered, by the
dream, more abundantly craving. Thus, every
fresh gratification of their vengeance upon the
Jews, will whet the appetite of the nations, for
further oppressions*.

9. Ye that are faithful † in the land, consider
diligently the signs of the times, be astonished at
the ignorance of the generality; delight your-
selves ‡ in your peculiar privileges; bear public
testimony against the sins of others: for the gene-
rality are intoxicated by their prejudices and pas-
sions, and drunkenness more fatal than that which
proceeds from wine or strong drink; they peruse
not the truth, though clearly manifested to them;
they stumble at the precepts, though accompanied
by evidences of divine authority ||.

10. Their sottish ignorance is an effect of the
just judgment of God, who, on account of their
resistance to the truth, has left them to walk in
their own counsels. As persons in a profound

* Many consider these two verses, as a
denunciation of vengeance against the ene-
mies of the Jews, but the sense given in the
paraphrase, appears to me, 1st, more con-
sistent with the scope and connection of the
prophet's discourse. 2d, It is a more ob-
vious and easy application of the simile.
3d, It has been fully verified by the event;
from the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans,
to the present moment, the Jews have been
more or less oppressed, in all ages, and by
all nations. 4th, The words of the prophet
have the same meaning with these of Moses,
"Thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled

evermore, and no man shall save thee,"
Deut. xxviii. 29. "Thou shalt be only op-
pressed, and crushed away," ver. 33. "and
among these nations shalt thou have no
ease," &c. ver. 65, 66. Mat. xvi. 3.

† The address is exceedingly suitable to
the converted Jews in our Saviour's time.

‡ I follow the literal translation of the
passage, which gives a more obvious sense
than our common translation, or that of
Bishop Lowth.

|| A just pretence of the Jews in our Sa-
viour's time.

sleep, are insensible of the objects that surround them, so they perceive not the evidences offered them of the truth. Their rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, are like persons blindfolded, and so incapable of directing them; "they be blind leaders of the blind *."

11, 12. The written word of God, though containing many clear prophecies concerning the Messiah and his times, is to them wholly unintelligible; as the contents of a sealed letter cannot be discovered, so the true sense of it cannot be attained, either by the learned or by the ignorant.

13. The Lord said further concerning this people, They are chargeable with gross hypocrisy, zealous for the outward forms of religion, but destitute of love to me at heart; while they are directed by the precepts of men, in preference to my word, "holding the tradition of the elders †."

14. Wherefore I will proceed to do a work among this people, marvellous and justly admired by all who understand and believe it; even the death and resurrection of the Messiah ‡, which shall be likewise a sign to an adulterous and sinful generation, in order to their condemnation; for the wisdom of their wise men shall not discern the truth of it, nor shall the understanding of their prudent men discover the propriety of it.

phets, and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.

11. And the vision of all is become unto you, as the words of a book which is sealed, which men deliver to one that is learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed.

12. And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned.

13. Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me, is taught by the precept of men.

14. Therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work amongst this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.

* Mat. xv. 14.

† Mark vii. 3. See Mat. xv. 8.

‡ Most interpreters consider the marvellous work mentioned in the first clause, to be no other, than destroying the wisdom of the wise, laid before us in the last clause of the verse. My reasons for the interpretation given in the paraphrase, are these:

1. The apostle evidently suggests it, Acts

xiii. 41. compared with the context. It is further confirmed by his explication of the last clause, 1 Cor. i. 19.

2. It is not probable, that the destroying the wisdom of the wise, would be introduced with so much solemnity here, as a marvellous work, when it had been mentioned twice before, ver. 10, 11.

15. Woe unto them that seek deep, to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

16. Surely your turning things upside down, shall be esteemed as the potters clay; or shall the work say of him that made it, he made me not; or, shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, he had no understanding?

17. Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest.

18. And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness.

19. The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord; and the poor among men shall rejoice in the holy one of Israel.

15. This judicial blindness, inflicted upon them, is a punishment they have justly deserved, because they are conceited of their own political wisdom, and are infidels with respect to the overruling providence of JEHOVAH; they believe not his omniscience and almighty power; their secret sentiments are, that he seeth not, or regardeth not the affairs of men.

16. Surely your reversing matters, in making the events of providence depend more upon your wisdom, than his appointment, is as absurd, as if the clay should be reckoned the potter. Is it reasonable, that the work should say of the workman, he hath not made me; or, that the thing formed should say of the former of it, he hath no understanding?

17. In a little time * after they discover this judicial blindness, in rejecting the Messiah, the Gentile nations, formerly excluded from God's husbandry, and uncultivated as Lebanon, shall be turned into a fruitful field; by receiving the ordinances of grace, and producing the fruits of righteousness: while the Jewish nation is excluded from the ordinances of God, and left to the influence of their own ignorance and depravity, shall resemble a field once fruitful, but now, deprived of the husbandman's care, overrun with briers, and changed into a forest.

18. And in that day, when the Gentiles shall be received as members of the church, persons who were strangers to God's revealed will, as the deaf to sounds, shall not only hear it addressed to their bodily ears, but shall likewise understand it, and submit to it; and those who had no apprehensions of spiritual objects, any more than the blind has of light, shall receive the spirit of wisdom and revelation, to dispel the ignorance arising from their prejudices and passions.

19. The fierce in disposition shall be made meek, patiently submitting to the afflictions sent by God, and the injuries committed by men: while this meekness shall secure and promote a spiritual joy, arising from their relation to JEHO-

* About 67 years elapsed, betwixt the crucifixion of our Saviour, and the destruction of the temple, which put an end to the ordinances of the Jewish church.

VAH, in whatever outward circumstances they are placed; even to the poor among men, shall the offers of salvation be freely made, and those who are rendered humble in heart, by receiving these offers, shall rejoice in their relation to, and resemblance of the holy One of Israel.

20. The gospel prevailing and advancing, shall, in process of time, destroy sinners of every denomination from the earth; particularly Antichrist, so long terrible to the church, shall be brought to nought; the scorner, who exercised his wit to ridicule religion, shall be consumed; all wise politicians, who contrive schemes for practising iniquity, shall be cut off.

21. The persecutors, who make a man an offender, for bearing testimony to the truth; the malevolent, who lay a snare, to find ground of accusation against him who is faithful in the discharge of a public office; and those who, being in a public office, pervert justice from mean worldly motives, shall be destroyed by the influence of the gospel, in which "the wrath of God shall be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*."

22. Therefore, as the gospel is thus powerful, it shall be effectual for the conversion of the Jewish nation. For JEHOVAH, who is able to accomplish his purpose, hath said to the descendents of Jacob, As I redeemed Abraham from idolatry, so will I redeem you from infidelity; as I hearkened to your progenitor Jacob, when, overwhelmed with confusion, he wrestled with me at Peniel; so will I hearken to you, when ye have recourse to me in faith. As I delivered him when his face waxed pale with terror, lest he himself, and the mother with the children, should be cut off†; so will I deliver you, when ye apprehend a similar fate, even at that period, when sinners are cut off from the earth.

23. For when you shall see a numerous spiritual offspring, begotten through the gospel, "my workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to good works," dwelling in the midst of the land posses-

20. For the terrible one is brought to nought, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off.

21. That make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, and turn aside the just for a thing of nought.

22. Therefore, thus saith the Lord, who redeemed Abraham, concerning the house of Jacob, Jacob shall not now be ashamed, neither shall his face now wax pale.

23. But when he seeth his children, the work of mine hands in the midst of him, they shall sanctify my name,

* Rom. i. 18.

† Gen. xxxii. 11.

and sanctify the holy One of Jacob, and shall fear the God of Israel.

24. They also that erred in spirit shall come to understanding, and they that murmured shall learn doctrine.

fed by your fathers, ye shall sanctify my name, which your fathers profaned; ye shall reverence him as the holy One of Jacob, whom your fathers blasphemed; ye shall devoutly submit to him as the God of Israel, whom your fathers rejected.

24. They that, through a spirit of error, rejected the Messiah, shall now, by the spirit of wisdom, come to understand the truth concerning him, and believe on him; they that murmured through envy, at the reception of the Gentiles, shall learn, that "in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, Barbarian nor Scythian, bond nor free." They shall therefore associate with these, "as fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of God's promise in Christ, by the gospel *."

* Eph. iii, 6.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet reprehends the Jews for entering into an alliance with the Egyptians, rather than trust to the protection of God, at the time Senacherib, king of Assyria, invaded the land, ver. 1,—7. He next charges them with contempt of God's messengers, and of the truths delivered by them; because they were unpalatable to flesh and blood, and inconsistent with the gratification of their carnal appetites, ver. 8,—11.

He proceeds farther to intimate the judgments of God, for these sins. And in regard the prophet foresaw, that the same spirit which prevailed in his own time, would continue and increase in after ages, he intimates the final consequences of it, their dispersion by the Romans, ver. 12,—17.; for the judgments threatened admirably apply to that event, but are not, in their full sense, applicable to any other. Thus, ver. 13, 14. the denunciations of divine wrath, are compared to a swelling in a high wall, which threatens to make a breach; it may continue this threatening for a long time, but at length it falls unexpectedly, and crushes a potter's vessel beneath it, so small, that not a sherd of it is useful for the meanest purposes: so the wrath of God, a long time delayed, would at length fall on the nation, and quite destroy their political existence. In like manner, ver. 17. intimates, that on account of their trusting to human supports, more than divine protection, their nation should be at length left, as a bea-

T

con on the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on a hill; that is, a spectacle set up to the view of all nations, bearing witness to their own sins, and the truth of God's threatenings against them, ver. 18. —26. The prophet describes a period still future, the happiness of the Jewish nation on being restored to the favour of God, and the possession of their land at the millennium. It is connected with the former part of the chapter, as being the termination of the judgment threatened, ver. 17. Again, the circumstances of the description can apply to no other period; as, their being exempted from all future calamities, "thou shalt weep no more," ver. 19. enjoying the ordinances of religion ever after, ver. 20. the time of these blessings, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall, that is, after the battle of Armageddon, and the fall of spiritual Babylon, ver. 28. the superior knowledge of these times represented, by an increase of light in the heavenly bodies. Ver. 26, 27. 33. are commonly applied to the destruction of Senacherib's army; but I apprehend they look forward to the fall of the king of spiritual Babylon, and his allies; an event which is coeval with the resettlement of the Jews in their own land, mentioned immediately before. My reasons for this opinion, over and above the connection now mentioned, are the following: 1st, The people following the Assyrian, are said to have a bridle in their jaws, causing them to err, ver. 28. This is not more applicable to Senacherib's army, than to many others before and after him; but it is peculiarly applicable to the allies of the king of spiritual Babylon, in their last effort; for they are gathered by the "spirits of devils, working miracles," Rev. xvi. 14. 2d, The manner of their punishment, by fire and hail stones, ver. 27. 30. 33. is not applicable to the Assyrian army, but accords exactly with the testimony of the prophets, concerning the final destruction of Antichrist, as Dan. vii. 11. "his body was given to the burning flame," Rev. xvi. 25. "there fell upon men a great hail," &c. Rev. xix. 25. 3d, The fall of the king in *Tophet*, cannot apply to Senacherib or his army, for he survived their destruction, and they were destroyed before they came near Jerusalem, close to the walls of which *Tophet* lies. But both these circumstances coincide in the final fall of the king of spiritual Babylon. He and his army came to their end in Judea, Dan. xii. 45. Yea in the valley of Jehoshaphat, which was a continuation of the valley of the son of Hinnom or *Tophet*, Joel iii. 12. 4th, This same enemy is called the Assyrian, chap. xiv. ver. 25.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Vengeance shall overtake the people of Judea, who resist my will, saith JEHOVAH, notwithstanding I have governed them with paternal af-

THE TEXT.

1. Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that take counsel, but not of me; and

at cover with a covering, but not of my spirit; that they may add sin to sin.

2. That walk to go down into Egypt (and have not asked at my mouth) to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt.

3. Therefore shall the strength of Pharaoh be your shame, and the trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion.

4. For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes.

5. They were all ashamed of a people that could not profit them, nor be an help nor profit, but a shame and also a reproach.

6. The burden of the beasts of the south: into the land of trouble and anguish, from whence come the young and old lion, the viper and fiery flying serpent; they will carry their riches upon the shoulders of young asses, and their treasures upon the bunches of camels, to a people that shall not profit them.

7. For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose; therefore have I cried con-

fection; who rely on their own schemes, rather than my counsels; who have recourse to other protection, than that to which I have directed them, by my Spirit on my servants.

2. Who in this invasion by the king of Assyria, fly to Egypt for protection, instead of having recourse to me by humble supplications; putting their trust in the forces of Pharaoh, and their confidence in the valour of the Egyptians, which shall prove to them a fleeting unsubstantial shadow.

3. Therefore shall the forces of Pharaoh disappoint your expectation, and your confidence in the valour of the Egyptians, (when it shall prove a fleeting unsubstantial shadow) shall end in your confusion.

4. They shall succeed in their scheme so far as to form an alliance with the king of Egypt; his princes shall meet them at Zoan, his ambassadors shall make terms with them at Hanes.

5. But in the end they shall be ashamed of the Egyptians, as a people that were not able to be of any advantage to them; instead of receiving assistance or any advantages from their * league with Pharaoh, it shall increase the conqueror's rage, and occasion greater disadvantage and disgrace, than would have otherwise befallen them.

6. These unbelievers that go down to Egypt, shall expose themselves to danger by the way, and to loss upon their arrival. I see in vision, the wilderness to the south of Judea, crowded with men and beasts of burden, flying to Egypt; some of them are devoured by lions, others bit by serpents; such as escape carry their substance and their treasures, on asses and camels, to Egypt, as a place of safety.

7. But there it shall be the prey of the conqueror; for the assistance of the Egyptians shall not be able to defend them, or their treasures; there-

* A change of the persons, even when the same subject is continued, is very frequent with the prophets, but for wise ends. Here, ver. 3. he addresses the Jews themselves, who went down to Egypt; ver. 4.

and 15. he speaks of them to others, as if he had said, "These people will not believe what I say, but ye that revere the word of God, shall see it accomplished."

fore have I formerly declared, and now repeat it, That their best protection in this calamity, is to rely upon God, and remain in the land.

8. JEHOVAH said to me, Go now, and write my declarations against this people, before them on a table, set them down in a book; that they may continue on record, as a witness against them, and for the justice of my dispensations towards them; likewise for the instruction of future generations, so long as the world remains.

9. Write that this people are rebels to my authority, in violating my covenant and disobeying my commands; though I have treated them with paternal affection.

10. They refuse also to receive instruction from my servants the prophets; being desirous that they should not declare the visions that are unpleasant, nor deliver the messages that are unpalatable, however profitable and consistent with truth these may be; but willing rather that they should speak to them things agreeable to flesh and blood; however inconsistent with truth, and dangerous, in their condition.

11. They esteem the laws of God too strict and rigid, and would have the prophets accommodate their instructions more to the maxims and manners of the world, by giving them liberty, at least occasionally, to step aside from the narrow path of the divine commandment; it is irksome to their ears to hear such frequent mention of the holiness of God; and the expressions by which the prophets introduced their messages, "Thus saith the holy One of Israel," are to them cant expressions that they cannot endure.

12. But however disagreeable these expressions may be, I will repeat them with reverence; you are also to hear them with awe: Thus saith the holy One of Israel, Because ye despise my instructions, and trust in the obliquity of your own minds, esteeming it wisdom, and put confidence in the perverseness of your own disposition, calling it fortitude:

13. Therefore this perverse disposition, continuing and increasing, in after ages shall bring a signal punishment on your nation; which may be

cerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

8. Now go, write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may be for the time to come for ever and ever.

9. That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord.

10. Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things; speak unto us smooth things; prophecy deceits.

11. Get ye out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the holy One of Israel to cease from before us.

12. Wherefore thus saith the holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon:

13. Therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a

high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant,

14. And he shall break it, as the breaking of the potter's vessel, that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found, in the bursting of it, a vessel to take fire from the hearth, or to take water without of the well.

15. For thus saith the Lord God, the holy One of Israel, In returning and rest shall ye be saved, in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength; and ye would not.

16. But ye said, No; for we will flee upon horses, therefore shall we flee: and we will ride upon the swift, therefore shall they that pursue you be swift.

17. One thousand shall flee at the rebuke of one; at the rebuke of five shall ye flee, and ye be left as a beacon upon the top of a mountain, and as an ensign on an hill.

18. And therefore shall the Lord wait,

fitly compared to a breach in a high wall, swelling out and continuing long in that position, at length falling suddenly on a potter's vessel beneath it.

14. As the breach is preceded by a swelling in the wall, which threatens a fall, and yet may continue a long time, until at length the wall falls unexpectedly, and crushes the potter's vessel so small, that no sherd of it is useful, even for the meanest purposes; thus, the wrath of God, frequently threatened and long delayed, will at length break out unexpectedly and violently, so as to destroy entirely your civil and religious polity.

15. Further, thus saith JEHOVAH, the holy One of Israel, I have frequently counselled you in every calamity, to return from the sins that occasioned it, and wait patiently on me, who hath sent it; and that you should obtain deliverance; to resign to my will, and put confidence in my protection, and that you should receive strength.

16. But ye obstinately rejected these counsels; the language of your heart and conduct was, We cannot trust that way of deliverance, we will betake ourselves to means more obvious and rational; we will take horses, and flee from this land, so shall we escape from the enemy: therefore ye shall flee before the enemy, from the land where ye expected to receive protection. Ye have said, the swiftness of our horses will carry us beyond the reach of the enemy; but I will give vigour to your enemies, and they shall be swifter still, and overtake you.

17. I will deprive you of courage and success in war, and bestow these on your enemies; so that a small number of them will put to the rout a very great number of you. At length, on account of your persevering in this disposition I reprehend, your enemies shall root you out of your land, and scatter you among the nations; and in that situation you shall remain a long time, like a beacon on the summit of a mountain, or a standard on a high hill, a spectacle to the whole world, a conspicuous monument of the truth of the divine threatenings against you.

18. Yet after all these evils shall come upon you, JEHOVAH shall exercise patience towards you,

so as not to cut you off; and at the time he hath appointed, he will be gracious to you for the manifestation of his own perfections*; he will have mercy upon you, by pardoning your past transgressions. JEHOVAH is a God of wisdom, who knoweth how to promote the ends of his own glory; blessed are all they who wait patiently for his time and manner of deliverance.

19. For the people that were expelled from the land, shall be again restored to the possession of it; when thus restored, thou shalt not ever after mourn for a dispersion from it; at the time of thy restoration, he will manifest his grace conspicuously, by giving an ear to the voice of thy cry in distress†; at the moment thou art pleading with him, he will give thee an answer of peace.

20. And though JEHOVAH inflicted on thee many grievous punishments, temporal and spiritual; during thy dispersion; after thy restoration, he will never deprive thee of the ordinances‡ of religion; thou shalt enjoy thine ordinances ever after.

21. Thou shalt likewise receive special grace to regulate thy heart and conduct; it shall address the heart secretly, like a voice from behind of a person unseen, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it; and shall effectually prevent your turning aside from the way of the divine commandments, either to the right hand or to the left.

* See Ezek. xxxvi. 22.

† It appears that some signal distress immediately precedes the conversion of the Jews, to which the prophet here alludes. See Key to the Prophecies, Part III. chap. iv. § 11.

‡ I am not a little astonished that the learned Bishop Lowth should translate the word **פֶּרֶק**, thy timely rain, which in our common version is, thy teachers. From the etymology, it is at least as probable that it should signify teachers as rain; but the connection of the word with the rest of the passage, must convince the attentive, that the sense conveyed by our common translation, is preferable. It is evident that the prophet, before and after this expression, is promising spiritual blessings. Thus before it, he promises the pardon of sin, the hearing of prayer, and immediately after, special

that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you for the Lord is a God of judgment; blessed are all they that wait on him.

19. For the people shall dwell in Zion at Jerusalem; thou shalt weep no more, he will be very gracious unto thee, at the voice of thy cry; when he shall hear it, he will answer thee.

20. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers.

21. And thine ear shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.

grace to direct their heart and conduct. Can any thing be more reasonable, than that he should promise in the midst of these benefits, the ordinances of religion, that are the vehicles of grace? Again, there is propriety in representing these ordinances by the word *teachers*, because they should not be the pompous ceremonies of the law, but the dispensation of the word and sacraments by teachers. If we take it to signify rain, besides interrupting the sense, it is an useless tautology, for the same promise is repeated, ver. 23.

Further, the heaviest calamity of the dispersion was, their being deprived of the ordinances of religion; when he mentions by way of contrast, the blessings of their restoration, it is reasonable he should mention their enjoyment of ordinances again.

22. Ye shall defile the covering of thy golden images of silver, and the ornament of thy molten images of gold; thou shalt cast them away as a filthy cloth; thou shalt say unto it, Get thee hence.

23. Then shall he give the rain of thy seed, that thou shalt sow the ground withal, and bread of the increase of the earth, and thou shalt be fat and plentiful; in that day shall thy cattle feed in large pastures.

24. The oxen likewise, and the young asses that ear the ground, shall eat clean provender, which hath been unyoked with the yoke, and with the snare.

25. And there shall be upon every high mountain, and upon every high hill, rivers and streams of waters, in the day of the great slaughter, when the towers fall.

26. Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days; in the day that the Lord buildeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound.

22. Through the influence of divine grace, thou shalt renounce not only gross outward idolatry, but likewise the more spiritual and secret heart-idolatry. When the affections of the heart would, in any instance, grasp the creature instead of the Creator, the soul will turn away with indignation from the thought, as the eye from a polluted garment; thou wilt say to it, with peremptory resolution, Get thee hence.

23. Together with spiritual, he shall bestow temporal blessings, he shall give seasonable rain to water the seed sown in the earth; he shall make the increase of that which is sown, good in quality, and abundant in quantity; and your pasture lands shall produce abundance of food for your cattle.

24. The crops shall be so plentiful, that the cattle employed in tillage shall be fed with grain, thoroughly cleansed from the chaff and the refuse.

25. And the summits of the highest mountains, that are commonly barren, shall be made fertile by fountains and streams of water*; at that time, when there shall be a great slaughter of the enemies of religion†, and spiritual Babylon, which seemed an impregnable fortress, shall fall‡.

26. And the knowledge of spiritual and divine truths, shall be diffused extensively, and bestowed abundantly; it shall as far excel the knowledge of any former period, as the natural light would exceed its ordinary degree, if the moon were as clear as the sun, and the light of the sun were increased seven-fold. These things shall be accomplished, at the time JEHOVAH shall restore his people, from their great dispersion||, and deliver them

* Perhaps the words have a figurative meaning, that nations the most ignorant, and barren as the tops of the mountains, shall receive the ordinances of religion, and the influences of the divine Spirit. His influences are compared to rain, Psal. lxxii. 6. and their effect on ignorant nations, is represented by making the tops of the mountains fertile, ver. 16.

† See Rev. xiv. 19, 20. and chap. xix. 17, 18.

‡ See Rev. xvi. 19.

|| I consider the word *breach*, as referring to that mentioned ver. 13. Here it is said to be bound up, when events shall be accomplished, which certainly have not hitherto taken place, therefore the breach must mean the Roman dispersion, as I have applied it.

from the reproaches and calamities occasioned by it.

27. At the same time, the enemies of God, particularly Antichrist and his adherents, shall be remarkably punished, according to the prophecies delivered long before the event. As the wrath of man may be discerned from the appearance of his countenance, so the wrath of God shall be evident in their destruction, from the manner of their punishment.

28. As an overflowing flood, rising to the midst of the neck, carries all down the stream; or as through an instrument for cleansing corn, ill constructed, the corn and chaff promiscuously pass; so their punishment shall be complete, without reserve or remnant, and all God's enemies shall be collected together, in order to that punishment; for Satan, whom they serve, shall deceive them, and lead them to the appointed punishment, as a horse is led by a bridle in his jaws*.

29. But ye my people shall then rejoice, as ye are now wont to do, on the evening in which your solemn festivals begin; ye shall have great and spiritual joy in the ordinances of religion, and in communion with God, as they are now wont to have, who come with a pipe to the temple, and there meet with the mighty One of Israel.

30. And JEHOVAH shall demonstrate the truth of his word, and manifest his power and just indignation, by destroying them, as fuel is consumed by a devouring fire, or as the productions of the earth are scattered and destroyed, by a tempest and hailstones.

31. For according to the word of JEHOVAH, uttered in the prophecies concerning him, shall Antichrist, typified by the king of Assyria, be utterly overthrown; even he who persecuted the church.

32. And the staff of correction, which JEHOVAH shall lay on Antichrist, shall pass over

27. Behold, the name of the Lord cometh from far, burning with his anger, and the burden thereof is heavy: his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire.

28. And his breath, as an overflowing stream, shall reach to the midst of the neck, to sift the nations with the sieve of vanity; and there shall be a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing them to err.

29. Ye shall have a song as in the night, when a holy solemnity is kept; and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe to come into the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty One of Israel.

30. And the Lord shall cause his glorious voice to be heard, and shall shew the lightning down of his arm, with the indignation of his anger, and with the flame of a devouring fire, with scattering, and tempest, and hailstones.

31. For through the voice of the Lord, shall the Assyrian be beaten down, which smote with a rod.

32. And in every place where the grounded staff shall

* See Rev. xvi. 14.

mass, which the Lord shall lay upon him, it shall be with tabrets and harps: and in battles of shaking, will he fight with it.

33. For Tophet is ordained of old, yea, for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large; the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, shall kindle it.

all * the enemies of religion, which shall occasion universal joy † to the people of God, and God shall signally display his power, in subduing those that make resistance to his correction.

33. For the place appointed for this signal punishment, in the counsel of God, manifested by prophecies uttered a long time before the event, is the valley of Tophet. In the appointed season it shall be prepared, for the final destruction of the king of spiritual Babylon. The destruction of him and his adherents shall be signal and complete, like that occasioned by fire; if a large and deep valley were filled with wood and much fire, and this mass of fuel were kindled by the breath of the Almighty, like a sulphureous stream ‡.

* The kings of the earth and their armies are gathered to Armageddon, Rev. vi. the seventh vial is poured in the air, i. e. on the whole kingdom of Satan, who is called the Prince of the power of the air.

† Rejoice over her, ye holy apostles and prophets, Rev. xviii.

‡ I have considered the words as a metaphor, yet they may have a great mixture

of a literal meaning, for the final destruction of Antichrist is represented in other passages as effected by fire. Thus, it is said of the fourth beast, his body was destroyed and given to the burning flame, Dan. vii. 11. And of the beast and false prophet, "these both were cast alive into a lake of fire, burning with brimstone," Rev. xix. 21.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter may have some view to Senacherib's invasion, as it is commonly applied: but if so, it is one of those prophecies which have a double meaning; for I apprehend it has a further aspect, to the destruction of the same enemies mentioned in the close of the preceding chapter. The reasons are:

1st, That some circumstances mentioned do not so well apply to Senacherib's invasion; as, ver. 3. "Both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together." Ezekiah was the person holpen by the Egyptians, yet he did not fall. Their armies never united that they should fail together. It would appear that mount Zion or the church of God is distinct, both from the principal and the ally in the confederacy, ver. 4. yet the story of these times does not mention any faction or party in Judah, distinct from the king and such as feared God, sufficient to justify this representation. Again, ver. 7. expresses the reformation

peculiar to the latter times or the millennium, which was not strictly true of the times of Hezekiah.

2d, The whole representation fully coincides with that of the other prophets, respecting the final fall of the king of mystical Babylon. The people of Egypt are among his allies, chap. xviii. and xix. Dan. xi. 43. He and his allies are involved in one common destruction, chap. xxiv. 21, 22. Rev. xvi. 16. Immediately on their fall, the millennium commences. Their destruction is effected partly by fire, ver. 9, which corresponds with chap. xxx. ver. 30. Dan. vii. 11. Rev. xix. 20.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Punishment shall be inflicted on the inhabitants of Judea, who have made an alliance with the Egyptians; they rely on the Egyptian forces, because they are numerous and brave; but they have no confidence in the God, who is in covenant with Israel, neither do they ask counsel of JEHOVAH.

2. Yet he in wisdom, will bring evil upon them, and will not set aside the word of his prophets which foretold it; at the time appointed, he will utterly destroy the Antichristian society and their allies.

3. The Egyptians are men not comparable to God; their devices and exertions are those of frail mortals, not equal to those of God's Spirit; therefore at the time God shall manifest his power, the head of the Antichristian society, who is the principal in the confederacy, and the Egyptians, with his other allies, shall be destroyed together, at the same time.

4. For JEHOVAH has revealed to me, concerning this matter, That as a lion growling over his prey, despises the noise of a multitude of shepherds collected together against him; so JEHOVAH, the Ruler of the universe, shall despise the tumult of the "kings of the earth and their armies," collected together to support Antichrist, at the time he will interpose to deliver his people Israel, and restore their national establishment.

THE TEXT.

1. Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help, and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord.

2. Yet he also is wise, and will bring evil, and will not call back his words; but will arise against the house of the evil doers, and against the help of them that work iniquity.

3. Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit; when the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they all shall fail together.

4. For thus hath the Lord spoken unto me, Like as the lion, and the young lion roaring on his prey, when a multitude of shepherds is called forth against him, he will not be afraid of their voice, nor abate himself for the noise of them: so shall the

Lord of hosts come down to fight for mount Zion, and for the hill thereof.

5. As birds flying, so will the Lord of hosts defend Jerusalem: defending also he will deliver it, and passing over he will preserve it.

6. Turn ye unto him, from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.

7. For in that day every man shall cast away his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which your own hands have made unto you for a sin.

8. Then shall the Assyrian fall with the sword, not of a mighty man; and the sword, not of a mean man, shall devour him; but he shall flee from the sword, and his young men shall be discomfited.

9. And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.

5. As the mother bird protects her young under her wings, and leaps forward on whatever enemy would annoy them; so JEHOVAH shall not only protect and deliver his people, but shall likewise with vehemence destroy their enemies.

6. O ye children of Israel, his people, turn ye by faith and repentance to him, from whom your fathers revolted, so much and so long.

7. For at the period in which he will interpose for your deliverance, every man must renounce secret as well as open idolatry; sins of act and of heart, national and personal.

8. When ye shall be thus converted, then shall Antichrist come to his end, not by the sword of man, but by the power of God, which, when displayed, shall put him to flight, and cause the courage of his chosen warriors to fail.

9. And he shall quit * his strong hold with terror, and the kings that assist him, in consternation shall flee †; so JEHOVAH hath said, who shall kindle a fire in Zion to consume him, and heat a furnace at Jerusalem to destroy him.

* Quit his strong hold, *i. e.* go beyond it, as Lowth properly translates it. The expressions are similar to these, Jer. xli. 19. "I will suddenly make him run away from her."

† Shall flee: literally, they shall tremble with flight, the same word answers for ensign or flight, according as it is pointed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE ARGUMENT.

SEVERAL interpreters have supposed, that this chapter refers to the times of Hezekiah, and to Senacherib's invasion. But that it cannot apply to those events is obvious; because,

1st, The character of the king, ver. 1, 2. and the efficacy of his government, ver. 3, 4. are set forth in expressions too lofty for Hezekiah, and the reformation of his time; accordingly most interpreters allow, that it has a further aspect to Christ and his kingdom.

2d, The calamities described ver. 9,—14. were by no means caused by Senacherib's invasion. It lasted too short a time to answer the description; so Bishop Lowth justly observes, "This description of impending distress belongs to other times, than that of Senacherib's invasion, from which they were so soon delivered *." No one that reflects for a moment can suppose, that during his invasion, briars and thorns came up on the land, yea on the houses of joy in the joyous city; that the palaces were forsaken; the forts and towers became dens for wild asses: but every circumstance has been amply fulfilled by the Roman dispersion.

3d, The conclusion of the chapter, from ver. 15. downward, represents the happiness of the millennium, while that happiness is introduced, by pouring the Spirit from on high, meaning the conversion of the Jews; and the desolation is said to continue until that event takes place. Now, what connection has the invasion of Senacherib, or even the Babylonish captivity, with the conversion of the Jews, and the millennium; whereas all the prophets represent these events as the termination of the Roman dispersion.

It appears to me, the design of the spirit of prophecy in this passage is, to give a general view of the events that occur, from the appearance of the Messiah to the millennium.

He gives a view of the Messiah's kingdom, and the advantages of it, ver. 1, 2.; gives a character of his faithful followers, ver. 3, 4. 5.; states the character of his opponents, viz. of the Jews who rejected him, ver. 6, 7.; intimates the establishment of the Messiah's kingdom, ver. 8.; and the punishment to be inflicted on his enemies, fulfilled by the Roman dispersion, ver. 9,—14.; foretels the conversion of the Jews, ver. 15.; the happiness consequent upon it, during the millennium, ver. 16,—18.; adds a mark of the time, the downfall of spiritual Babylon, ver. 19.; pronounces a blessing on the Jews, for propagating the gospel among the nations, ver. 20. As the whole circumstances of the narrative agree to these events, so the several parts of it are naturally connected by this interpretation.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Behold the promised Messiah shall come and reign in the earth, for the furtherance and esta-

THE TEXT.

1. Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes

* Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, Notes on the place.

shall rule in judgment.

2. And a man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

3. And the eyes of them that see, shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken:

4. The heart also of the rash, shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerer shall be ready to speak plainly.

5. The vile person shall be no more called liberal, nor the churl to be bountiful.

6. For the vile person will speak villany, his heart will work iniquity, to practise hypocrisy, and to utter lies against the Lord, he will make empty the hands of the hungry; he will cause the

blissment of righteousness; and all his faithful subjects shall be princes*, ruling over their own passions, and walking according to God's laws.

2. He, by assuming the human nature, shall be to them a refuge from the wrath of God, and a deliverer from eternal death, which shall burst on the wicked like a tempest; his grace shall comfort them, and make them fruitful in works of righteousness, as streams of water refresh and render fertile the thirsty soil; his presence shall uphold them amidst the trials and temptations of a present world, as the shadow of a great rock allays the fatigue of a traveller, in a weary land.

3. "The eyes of their understanding" that submit to him "shall be opened," to discern his glory; their ears shall hearken to his dictates:

4. "Their hearts also shall be purified to an unfeigned obedience of the truth," and their tongue, which, like that of the stammerer, was unable to utter divine things, shall now be eloquent in his praise.

5. The superior knowledge of his times, shall enable men "to discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked;" so that the irreligious man, who is indeed vile†, shall not be had in honour; nor shall the man who acts from covetous or selfish principles, be reckoned liberal‡.

6. At the same time, the illiberal vileness of those, who do not submit to the Messiah, shall be evident, for they shall avowedly reject him from covetousness||. Their hearts are full of "extortion, and all manner of wickedness," while they endeavour to conceal their inward corruptions, by an extraordinary appearance of superior zeal in

Rev. i. 6. Rev. v. 10.

Psal. xv. 4.

The delusion mentioned by the prophet, from which Christians ought to be free, is still too prevalent. How many are pursued for their rank and fortune, who ought to be condemned for their sentiments and conduct! How many are reckoned liberal, while covetousness reigns in the heart! They disperse freely with one hand, while they gather oppressively with the other: or perhaps their liberality is the caterer of

their lust, or the flatterer of their vanity. How happy for mankind, were they directed by the light of truth, so as neither to deceive others, nor be deceived themselves, with specious vice instead of virtue!

|| That covetousness was the principle, which induced the rulers of the Jews to reject Christ, is evident, from the speech of Caiaphas, "If we let him alone, all men will believe upon him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation."

observing the outward forms of religion. They utter blasphemy against the Messiah, who is JEHOVAH; and, not satisfied with rejecting the bread of life, offered by him, they endeavour to deprive others of it; "not entering into the kingdom of heaven themselves, nor permitting those who would enter *."

7. The manner of their opposition likewise, to the Messiah and his followers, is illiberal. They endeavour to destroy both, partly by secret slanders, partly by public prosecutions †.

8. But the design of the Messiah and his followers is, of all others, the most liberal, even that of delivering mankind from the slavery of sin and Satan, from the misery of death and hell. And by offering this scheme to mankind, shall his kingdom be established.

9. At the same time his illiberal opponents, the bulk of the Jewish nation, shall be visited with judgment, a judgment so universal, as to extend to all ranks and degrees. Ye women of superior rank, (though commonly the last who feel the calamities of war and famine), would do well to rouse from your security, and attend to my declarations, for even to you shall the threatened calamity extend.

10. Though an ordinary scarcity did not trouble you, because your affluence procured what was necessary, till plenty returned; yet in this calamity ye shall be troubled; because, for a long period of time, there shall be neither vintage, nor harvest in the land.

11. Though now at ease, ye shall tremble for fear of want; though now careless, ye shall be troubled to procure the necessities of life; though now sumptuously arrayed, ye shall see cause to put off your ornaments, and to gird you with sackcloth as mourners.

12. All the inhabitants shall lament for the

* The several clauses of this verse, shew the striking features of the Jews in our Saviour's time. Christ's reproof of the Pharisees, and the acts of the apostles, are the best comments on it.

† The most natural translation of the last clause is, to destroy the needy, by pronouncing judgment.

drink of the thirsty shall fail.

7. The instruments also of the church are evil; he deviseth wicked devices, to destroy the poor with lying words, even when the needy speaketh right.

8. But the liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.

9. Rise up, ye women that are at ease, hear my voice, ye careless daughters; gird your ear unto my speech.

10. Many days and years shall ye be troubled, ye careless women; for the vintage shall fail, the gathering shall not come.

11. Tremble ye men that are at ease, be troubled, ye careless ones: strip ye, make ye bare, and gird sackcloth upon your loins.

12. They shall

ment for the teats, for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.

13. Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers; yea upon all the houses of joy, in the joyous city.

14. Because the places shall be forsaken; the multitude of the city shall be left, the forts and towers shall be for dens for ever, a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks.

15. Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest.

16. Then judgment shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field.

17. And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

blessings of the land of their nativity, when deprived of them, milk, and corn, and wine.

13. The judgment shall be so long continued, that briers and thorns shall come up in the fields of the land of Judea, when left uncultivated, though now famous for its fertility. Nor shall these grow in the fields only, but in the houses where joy once reigned, and in the cities formerly crowded with inhabitants.

14. Because even the splendid houses shall be forsaken of their possessors, and the cities shall be deprived of their inhabitants; so that the fortified cities and towers, when waste and broken down, shall furnish dens for wild asses, which they shall enjoy without molestation, and shall afford pasture for flocks.

15. The land shall continue thus deserted, and the inhabitants ejected, until God bestow "the Spirit of grace and supplication on the Jewish nation; and they shall look to him whom they have pierced and mourn*," until they return by unfeigned repentance, and receive, by genuine faith, the Messiah whom their fathers rejected. Then shall the Jewish nation resemble a fruitful field cultivated by God, and producing the fruits of righteousness; whereas they did resemble the wilderness deserted of God, uncultivated and barren. At the same time, the followers of Antichrist, though for a time reckoned the true church of God, a fruitful field cultivated by him, shall be counted a forest, barren and unprofitable to him: for the deformity of their superstition shall be evident.

16. At that time, the polity of the Jewish nation shall be restored, notwithstanding they were so long deserted of God; and righteousness shall prevail and continue among the people, in consequence of the means of instruction bestowed on them.

17. The effect of prevailing righteousness shall be peace with God, and harmony with each other; founded on principles that secure its continuance.

* Zech. xiii: 10.

18. And my people shall be restored to their own land, which they shall find a peaceable habitation, secure from foreign wars, and from intestine commotion.

19. These things shall be accomplished at that period, when the enemies of real religion, particularly the supporters of Antichrist, shall be punished with a grievous war, which, like a storm of hail *, shall consume them; and the system of spiritual Babylon shall be destroyed, as a fortified city when her walls and bulwarks are made level with the plain †.

20. Ye, my restored people, shall at that time be happy, in propagating the gospel successfully among the nations; sending forth missionaries for that purpose; sowing the seed of the word, in all places watered by Divine grace, and sending forth laborious, patient labourers into God's husbandry ‡.

18. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.

19. When it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the city shall be low in a low place.

20. Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters; that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.

* From the connexion, it appears that the hail refers to the same times and persons with that mentioned Rev. xvi. 19. and the city is the same with Babylon, mentioned Rev. xiv. 21.

† The passage is thus literally and truly

translated by Bishop Lowth, "And the city shall be laid level with the plain."

‡ That the Jews shall send missionaries to propagate the gospel among the nations, is evident from many other passages, as Isa. ii. 2, 3. Isa. xiv. 20,---25. Isa. lxvi. 19.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter is commonly supposed to refer to Senacherib's invasion, and the destruction of his army. But I apprehend it points to a more important event, the destruction of Gog and his army in the land of Judea, at the close of the millennium. My reasons for this opinion are the following, of which the reader may judge:

1st, It cannot apply to Senacherib's invasion, in a strict and literal sense; because ver. 5, and 6. contain expressions too lofty to suit Hezekiah's government; but they are strictly true of Christ's. Again, in verses 21, 22, 23, 24. we have the language in which the prophets uniformly describe the happiness of the latter times; but what connexion can be traced betwixt the description of Senacherib's army, and the glory of the millennium? Whereas the destruc-

tion of Gog's army and the glory of the millennium are closely connected.

2. The connection of this with the preceding chapter, leads me to apply it to Gog. The former concluded with an account of the millennium: this describes an invasion of Judea posterior to it, precisely agreeing to the account in the apocalypse, chap. xx. 7, 8. that when the thousand years are expired, Gog leads his army against the beloved city.

3. All the circumstances agree to Gog's invasion. This is a sudden attack with the sword, ver. 1. and 8. compared with Ezekiel xxxviii. 9. 15, 16. and Rev. xx. 8. The invasion is undertaken to gather spoil from the peaceable habitations of the church. Compare ver. 1. with Ezekiel xxxviii. 11, 12. Yet the attempt shall end in making the invaders a spoil to the people of God, ver. 1. and 4. with Ezekiel xxxix. 10. God's hand is visible in their destruction, and their punishment is partly by fire, ver. 3. 10, 11, 12. with Ezekiel xxxviii. 22. and Rev. xx. 9. After the destruction of Gog, the church, at least that of the Jews, enjoys an uninterrupted calm, till the day of judgment. Compare ver. 10. with Ezekiel xxxiv. 22. *

In ver. 1. the prophet addresses Gog, expressing the injustice of his ambitious designs, and the sudden disappointment of them. Ver. 2. the Jews are introduced offering up their ardent supplications to God, in their present distress. Ver. 3, 4. contain an answer to their supplication, promising the destruction of Gog. Ver. 5, 6. represent the thankful acknowledgments of the Jews for the answer given, their acquiescence in God's protection, and the promised deliverance. Ver. 7, 8, 9. describe the consternation and dismay occasioned throughout the land of Judea, by the approach of Gog's army. Ver. 10, 11, 12. God is introduced confirming the promise already given, and threatening the destruction of Gog's army. Ver. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. are a practical improvement of the subject, being an exhortation to holiness, founded on the display of God's judgment, in the destruction of Gog and his army.

From ver. 17. to the close, there is a description of the peace and happiness of the Jewish church, under the Divine protection, after the destruction of Gog, conformable to these expressions of Ezekiel, on the same subject, "So the house of Israel shall know, that I am the Lord their God, from that day and forward," Ezekiel xxxix.

* See Key to the Prophecies, p. 450.

THE PARAPHRASE.

THE TEXT.

1. I intimate thy punishment, O Gog, because thou hast invaded and spoiled the peaceable habitations of the church, while she committed no injury on thee; and hast violated thy engagements of submission to her authority*: whereas she is not chargeable with violating her compact with thee. Thy punishment shall be similar to thy crime; for when thou hast spoiled, so much as God for wise ends hath appointed; thou and thy forces shall become a spoil to thine enemies: and when thou hast carried thy treachery the length which God hath permitted, thy followers shall deal treacherously with thee, for "every man's sword shall be against his brother," Ezekiel xxxviii. 21.

2. Upon the report of Gog's invasion, the church shall address God in humble supplication, thus: O JEHOVAH, do thou shew mercy to us, for to thee it pertains to frustrate or to establish the designs of men; and we put our trust in thy perfections, not in human resources. Do thou assist all thy people, in their various duties and difficulties, and grant us deliverance from the distress which now threatens us.

3. We are encouraged to plead with thee for deliverance; because, on former occasions, thy thunder hath dispersed the enemies of thy people, and thy interposition hath defeated nations combined against them.

4. In answer to this prayer, they shall hear God addressing Gog and his forces thus: O ye plunderers, who have engaged in an unjust war for the purpose of gathering spoil, and put confidence in your numbers, resembling caterpillars or locusts, for the execution of your purpose: your spoil shall be gathered by my people, as easily and effectually as the caterpillar makes a prey of green herbs; and your forces shall be destroyed by my people, as irresistibly and completely as the locusts consume every green thing.

1. Woe to thee that spoilest, and thou wast not spoiled; and dealest treacherously, and they dealt not treacherously with thee: when thou shalt cease to spoil, thou shalt be spoiled: and when thou shalt make an end to deal treacherously, they shall deal treacherously with thee.

2. O Lord, be gracious unto us; we have waited for thee: be thou their arm every morning; our salvation also in the time of trouble.

3. At the noise of the tumult the people fled; at the lifting up of thyself, the nations were scattered.

4. And your spoil shall be gathered, like the gathering of the caterpillar; as the running to and fro of locusts, shall he run upon them.

* All nations are members of the millennial church, consequently Gog and his followers

5. The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high; he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.

6. And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the Lord is his treasure.

7. Behold, their valiant ones shall cry without; the ambassadors of peace shall weep bitterly.

8. The high ways lie waste, the way-faring man ceaseth; he hath broken the covenant, he hath despised the cities, he regardeth no man.

9. The earth mourneth and languisheth; Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down: Sharon is like a wilderness: and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits.

5. In consequence of the answer received, the church shall praise God, saying, JEHOVAH hath magnified his perfections; for he hath shewed that his kingdom ruleth over all; so that it pertains to him to forward or to frustrate the designs of men. He hath filled the hearts of all the members of his church with love, and their tongues with praise; for the judgment inflicted on their enemies, and the justice displayed in that dispensation.

6. O thou that art the King and Head of the church, in the days of thy reign shall genuine knowledge and heavenly wisdom flourish: These shall prove the means of establishing thy kingdom, and of securing, not only temporal deliverance, but likewise eternal salvation to thy people. As a bountiful king disperses his treasure among his subjects, so thou wilt widely diffuse the fear of JEHOVAH, which is thy treasure, among the subjects of thy kingdom.

7. In the mean time Gog approaches with his army, and terror seizes on all ranks and degrees of persons. The brave, to whom the defence of the land is committed, cry out, being unable to resist him. The ambassadors, dispatched to offer terms of peace, weep bitterly; for all terms are rejected.

8. The inhabitants fly from the villages, to woods and fastnesses for security; so that the high-ways are deserted. The invader, throwing aside all principle, hath violated every engagement; the cities * he despises as unable to resist him; he regards neither age, nor rank, nor respectability of character.

9. Persons of all conditions in the land mourn; all joy and activity have ceased. Those of superior rank are moved with terror, as when the cedars of Lebanon are agitated by a mighty wind. The fair sex pine away with fear, as when the roses of Sharon wither. The rich are stripped of their wealth, as when the fertile fields of Carmel are cut down with the harvest sickle. And the

* The reason of despising the cities, I say, I will go up to the land of unwall'd villages." learn from Ezek. xxxviii. 11. "Thou shalt

laborious part of the community, resembling the cattle of Bashan, cease to labour, and yield without resistance to the conqueror.

10. When a universal consternation arrives at the highest pitch, and human resources for deliverance fail, JEHOVAH saith, Now is the time for me to interpose. I will now acquire glory by delivering my people. I will now manifest my perfections conspicuously, in the destruction of their enemies.

10. Now will I rise, saith the Lord; now will I be exalted; now will I lift up myself.

11. O ye enemies of my people, your schemes, so wisely concerted, shall be disappointed; your operations, successfully begun, shall be disconcerted; they shall pass away like the untimely birth of a woman. The rich harvest of spoil ye promised yourselves, shall end in chaff; the numerous forces collected together to procure it, shall be dispersed as stubble is driven by the wind. The division, fomented in the church by your means, shall end in your destruction. The fire, formed by your own breath, shall finally devour you; for every man's sword shall be against his brother.

11. Ye shall conceive chaff; ye shall bring forth stubble; your breath, as fire, shall devour you.

12. The numerous people, artfully collected against the church, may be fitly compared to limestones, which men gather to throw into the kiln; or to thorns grubbed up, gathered together, and thrown into the fire, in order to be consumed: For as limestones burnt, prove proper cement for building, so the destruction of these sinners shall prove the mean of cementing together the faithful members of the church, which is God's building. And as grubbing thorns out of a fertile field, where they choaked the seed, occasions a greater degree of fruitfulness, so the destruction of these sinners, by delivering the church from their noxious influence and example, will occasion a further progress in holiness.

12. And the people shall be as the burnings of lime; as thorns cut up shall they be burned in the fire.

13. And now, ye men of every nation, whether ye are near to the place where the army of Gog was destroyed, or at a distance, and hearing it only by report, lay this dispensation of my Providence to heart, and acknowledge that my power is irresistible.

13. Hear, ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might.

14. The finners in whom are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?

15. He that worketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

16. He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure.

17. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off.

14. This will excite fear in the hearts of those who are finners within the pale of the church; and rouse hypocrites, satisfied with an outward profession, out of their security. It will lead them to argue thus: Who among us can fly from or resist him, whose presence and power surround us every where? who among us can dwell with him, whose presence is to finners a consuming fire? If the fire, kindled by his anger here, was so terrible to his enemies, who among us can endure the fire to be kindled by his anger hereafter? and to be maintained by his power throughout the endless ages of eternity?

15. Are you unable to avoid his presence, and sincerely desirous of knowing how you may endure it? practise holiness. The same Divine presence, which is to finners a consuming fire, constitutes the happiness of the righteous, putting "gladness into their hearts, more than when corn and wine increase," Psal. iv. 7. This is the character of the man on whom the divine presence shall confer happiness. He manifests the integrity of his heart, by adhering uniformly in his conduct to righteousness, in his discourse to truth. He abhors the covetous and cruel disposition, that amasses wealth by oppressing others. He carefully avoids receiving a bribe, which might induce him to pervert justice. He enters not into the counsel of those, who contrive measures for shedding the blood of others unjustly; and looks not with approbation on any kind of wickedness, in himself or another.

16. The man of this character shall enjoy serenity of mind, which is preferable to an exalted station. He shall be secure under the protection of the Deity, which is more for defence than a place of strength fortified by art and nature. He shall certainly receive that portion of the good things of this life, from the bountiful hand of his God, which he, in his wisdom, seeth to be best and fittest for him.

17. Whosoever thou art to whom this character pertains, thou shalt receive, in addition to these advantages, a view of God's presence in his ordinances; thou shalt see the beauty of the king

and head of his church, in his sanctuary; and that, as an earnest of being admitted to his more immediate presence, in that heavenly country, "far removed from the present world, where an everlasting rest and eternal joy are provided for his people.

18. As for thee, O inhabitant of Judea, after the destruction of Gog and his army, thou shalt meditate on the past terror with gratitude; and express thy thankfulness with triumphant joy, saying, Where is now the invader and his formidable forces? Where is he who registered men and their effects as his prey? Where is the tax-gatherer, who seized on the effects of high and low, with an unrelenting heart, and a rapacious hand? Where is he who proudly boasted that he had calculated and despised all our arts of defence?

19. And thy joy for the past shall be increased, by thy prospect of the future; for I pledge my veracity, that thou shalt not again see a barbarous people invade thy land. Thou shalt have no occasion to enter into treaty, or to offer supplication to a people, whose language thou art not able to understand.

20. Thou shalt see in the church of Judea the ordinances of religion, stated and solemn, regularly dispensed. Thou shalt see the whole land under the protection of the civil government, a peaceable dwelling-place for its inhabitants, secure from foreign wars, and civil commotions. And though, in former times, the national establishment was dissolved once and again, after a period of prosperity, like a tabernacle now erected, and then pulled down; from henceforth it shall resemble a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. The national establishment shall not be dissolved, so long as the earth remains. The inhabitants of Judea shall not be removed from their land, nor deprived of their ordinances.

21. And in these JEHOVAH, to manifest his glory, shall bestow the liberal influences of his Spirit; which shall refresh the souls of his people, as copious streams refresh the thirsty traveller: yea as broad rivers and clear streams multiply the

18. Thine heart shall meditate terror; where is the scribe? where is the receiver? where is he that counted the towers?

19. Thou shalt not see a fierce people; a people of deeper speech than thou canst perceive; of a stammering tongue that thou canst not understand.

20. Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken.

21. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams; wherein shall go no galley with oars,

either shall gallant
ships pass thereby.

number of fishes *, and preserve them alive and vigorous ; so the grace bestowed shall increase the number of converts in the church, preserve them spiritually alive, and free from spiritual maladies ; and the operations of divine grace shall not be resisted, as in former times, by superstitions of human invention, rendering the ordinances of divine institution unfit for maintaining spiritual life ; as galleys and ships, passing through the limpid stream, make it turbid, and unfit for fishes to live in.

22. For the Lord is
our judge, the Lord is
our lawgiver, the Lord
is our king, he will
save us.

22. At that period, the nation shall be governed by a theocracy: JEHOVAH shall animate persons, in the various departments of the state, by his Spirit, directing them in their legislative and executive capacities, as well as in the office of chief magistrate ; so that safety to mens persons and effects, shall be joined to spiritual peace, and both shall be an earnest of eternal salvation.

23. Thy tacklings
are loosed ; they could
not well strengthen
their mast ; they could
not spread the sail :
then is the prey of a
great spoil divided ; the
same take the prey.

23. As for thee, O Gog, thy efforts to resist my power, shall be ineffectual, like those of mariners endeavouring to bear up against a rapid torrent ; they hail their ropes, but cannot strengthen the mast ; they endeavour in vain to unfurl their ensign : then shall the spoil, acquired by thy conquests, be divided by my people, as their booty ; the people, whom thou didst disperse, as unable to resist thee, shall take the prey thou hast gathered.

24. And the inha-
bitant shall not say, I
am sick ; the people
that dwell therein shall
be forgiven their ini-
quity.

24. Every member of the true church, at that period, shall be free from spiritual maladies ; and enjoy the happiness which arises from a sense of God's mercy, in pardoning their sins, and admitting them into fellowship with him.

* Divine grace is compared to a stream refreshing the thirsty traveller, Isa. xli. 17. Again it is compared to a stream, considered as the proper element of fishes, and consequently the people of God are represented by these fishes, Ezek. xlvii. 9. Mat. iv. 19. Mat. xiii. 47.

It appears to me, that the prophet uses the metaphor in both these senses. The last is obvious from the connection with the

latter clause of the verse ; ships annoy fishes in the water, but do not annoy men who live on the banks. The former sense I infer from ver. 24. where the church is compared to a city ; so the broad river must be the same with that mentioned Rev. xxii. 1. which ran through the street of the city. Both these senses are blended together, Ezek. xlvii. Compare ver. 9. with ver. 12.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

FROM the beginning of this chapter to ver. 8. we have a description of the battle of Armageddon, and of the final extirpation of popery, under the name of Edom. All the circumstances of the description exactly agree with the representations given of it, in other places of scripture. All nations and their armies are delivered to the slaughter, ver. 2. so Joel iii. 11, 12. "Assemble yourselves and come, all ye heathen: I will sit to judge all the heathen;" and Rev. xvi. 14. 16. "the kings of the earth, and the whole world, are gathered together to Armageddon." The slaughter is so great, that "mountains shall be melted with their blood," ver. 3. a hyperbolical expression, similar to that used by the apostle, on the same subject, Rev. xiv. 20. "Blood came out of the wine-press, even to the horse-bridles." Compare ver. 4. with Joel iii. 15. and ver. 6, 7. with Rev. xix. 17, 18. This application is confirmed by ver. 8. which fixes the time of fulfilling the prophecy. It is the vengeance; that is, according to the prophet, Dan. ii. 44, 45. "When the stone cut out without hands, shall smite the image on the toes," after the last state of the fourth universal empire comes to an end; and Dan. vii. 11. "When the little horn is judged, and the body of the fourth beast is given to the burning flame;" that is, when the Papal dominion, which is the last form of the fourth universal empire, is finally extinguished; or when, according to the apostle John, Rev. xix. 20. "The beast and false prophet are taken at Armageddon, and cast into the lake of fire." Again, it is the period of recompense, (to the advocate or defender of Zion), as it should be rendered; that is, when the kingdom of the Messiah shall be established in the world; which exactly coincides with the period of vengeance on his enemies, as appears from the passages already quoted; for when the image is destroyed, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. When the little horn is judged, dominion is given to the Son of man, Dan. vii. 14. and judgment was given to the saints, ver. 22. When the beast and false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, the martyrs of Jesus sit on thrones of judgment, Rev. xx. 4. From ver. 9. to the close of the chapter, the prophet describes the destruction and perpetual desolation of the city of Rome. My reasons for this opinion are the following:

1. The whole description shews, that the prophet represents the desolation of a city literally taken. The connection with the pre-

ceding part of the chapter implies, that it must be the chief city of Edom or Idumea, mentioned ver. 5. I have already proved, that by Idumea, the prophet understands the system of popery to be extinguished at Armageddon; consequently he here understands Rome connected with that system, as the imperial city with empire.

2. Rome is in scripture called Babylon, Sodom, Egypt, and why not Edom? Indeed there appears a peculiar propriety in giving papal Rome the name of Edom; for as Edom and his seed were brethren to the Israelites in the flesh, but their bitterest enemies; so papal Rome, and the subjects of her jurisdiction, are professedly Christians, but the most cruel persecutors of the Christian spirit.

3. The Jews, by Edom in this chapter, understand Rome: R. David (in Principio Obadiæ) says, "What the prophets say concerning the desolation of Edom in the latter days, they have said concerning Rome*:" and in the genuine edition of the Chaldee paraphrase, ver. 9. runs thus, "And the rivers of Rome shall be turned into pitch†."

4. The circumstances of the description do not suit ancient Idumea, but fully agree to the predictions of the prophets, in other passages, concerning the destruction of Rome, particularly to Rev. xviii. throughout.

The destruction of Rome is an event which takes place before ‡ the battle of Armageddon; it is here mentioned last, because the chief design of the prophet is, to shew the final extirpation of popery, and of every false religion; but he is led to mention the destruction of Rome, as the greatest blow which popery had received, before Armageddon; in order to intimate likewise, that the system should never be revived.

After a solemn address to all nations, which implies the importance of the subject, ver. 1. the prophet intimates a great judgment to be inflicted on the enemies of the church, particularly on the system of popery and its supporters, ver. 2, 3.; the dissolution of the government and authority exercised by the rulers of the system, ver. 4.; the certainty of the destruction threatened, to be executed chiefly by the sword, ver. 5, 6, 7.; the time of this judgment, ver. 8.; the destruction of the capital city by fire, ver. 9.; the perpetuity and greatness of its desolation, from ver. 10. to the end.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Come near, ye nations, to hear; and 1. Ye nations, however situated, ye people of every kindred, attend diligently to the prophecy

* Buxtorf. Chald. Lex. in voc. אֲדוֹמָא.

† See Key to the Prophecies, Part ii,

† See Newton's Dissertations on Proph. Sect. 5. and 7.

Part iii. on Rev. xix.

I am to utter ; the events foretold in it, are of importance to the world and its inhabitants, in a moral and religious view ; to the earth and its productions, in a natural view.

2. For the anger of JEHOVAH is kindled against all those nations that are enemies to the truth ; and his indignation is manifested against their armies, collected together to defend the false system of Antichrist, and to resist the truth. He hath devoted them to destruction, and delivered them over to the slaughter he hath appointed.

3. The multitude slain shall be so great, that their bodies shall remain unburied ; so that the putrid steam arising from their carcases, shall annoy passengers, and induce them to turn aside. Nor shall that putrid steam be more nauseous to passengers, than the corruption of their system of errors, shall be to mankind, when it is unmasked by the signal judgment inflicted upon them. The quantity of blood shed shall be so great, that the mountains shall seem to run down with streams of blood, and to be dissolved by it. And the certain consequences of this decisive slaughter, shall be, that the greatest empires on earth, which support false systems of religion, shall be dissolved, though they had subsisted for ages, and were, to human appearance, unmoveable as the mountains*.

4. And the government of the church of Rome, shall be dissolved as effectually, as the order of the natural world would cease, if the sun and moon were annihilated, and the visible heavens were rolled up as a scroll. All the officers of state, her superior and inferior clergy, shall be driven from their authority, as the leaves of the vine, and the fruit of the fig-tree, are cast down to the ground, by a violent tempest.

5. This punishment shall certainly be executed, for I have decreed it, saith JEHOVAH, and revealed it to my church ; my sword is already unsheathed in heaven, it shall come down at the time appoint-

hearken ye people, let the earth hear, and all that is therein ; the world, and all things that come forth of it.

2. For the indignation of the Lord, is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies, he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.

3. Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

4. And all the host of the heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.

5. For my sword shall be bathed in heaven ; behold it shall come down upon Edmea, and upon the

* I have blended the literal and the figurative meaning in the paraphrase, because I find both mentioned in other passages, where the same event is foretold. The literal, Rev. xiv. 20. "And blood came out of the wine-press, even to the horse-bridles ;"

the expression, though hyperbolic, is to be taken in a literal sense, as descriptive of a great slaughter. The figurative meaning is intended, Rev. xvi. 20. "every island fled away, and the mountains were not found."

people of my curse to judgment.

6. The sword of the Lord is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams : for the Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozra, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.

7. And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls, and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.

8. For it is the day of the Lord's vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy (advocate *) of Zion.

9. And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

10. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever; from generation to generation, it shall lie waste, none shall pass through it for ever and ever.

ed, on the head and members of the church of Rome, whose cruel opposition to my people, resembles that of the Edomites to their brethren. I have therefore in justice devoted them to destruction, by a solemn oath ; the judgment shall be inflicted.

6. The destruction of these enemies to the truth, shall be a sacrifice more acceptable to JEHOVAH, than the most costly sacrifices enjoined by the law; for it will glorify his power, in being superior to his enemies ; his justice, in retaliating the blood shed by them ; his goodness, in protecting his church ; and his faithfulness, in fulfilling the prophecies concerning their fall.

7. The ground which received the blood of God's people, shed by these cruel persecutors, resembling the rhinoceros or bulls of Bashan, shall be soaked with their blood in return, and enriched with their carcases ; then it shall appear, that the ease and affluence previously bestowed, was no evidence of God's approving their system, but intended for the clearer manifestation of his justice, in their destruction ; as bullocks are fed in rich pastures, to prepare them for the sacrifice.

8. The destruction shall take place at that period, which JEHOVAH hath appointed for taking vengeance on all the enemies of the true religion throughout the earth ; at that period, in which the kingdom of the Messiah shall be established, who is the advocate and defender of his church.

9. About the same time, Rome, and the country which surrounds it, shall be destroyed in a remarkable manner, by a subterraneous fire. The rivers of it shall seem to be turned into pitch, and the dust of it to sulphur ; the whole land shall be in one conflagration.

10. The fire shall produce lasting effects, like that which destroyed the cities of the plain, Sodom and Gomorrah ; for the city shall never be rebuilt. The country shall be waste and uncultivated, throughout all generations ; and none shall pass through the city, for pleasure, business, or devotion, so long as the earth endures.

* As from דין, דין a judge ; so from ריב, ריב an advocate.

11. The country surrounding it, reduced to a morass, shall be possessed by cormorants and bitterns, which haunt marshy grounds only; the houses of the city, waste and broken down, shall furnish dwellings for owls and ravens, that delight in old ruins. Though once famous for the beauty and regularity of its streets and palaces, God shall reduce it to a mass of rubbish, deformed and irregular.

12. Men shall no longer call her, the residence of nobles, the seat of powerful empire; for the princes that ruled in her, exist not.

13. Her mouldering palaces shall be overrun with thorns; her spacious courts overspread with nettles and brambles; her lofty temples, shining with costly ornaments, shall be the habitations of serpents and owls.

14. Wild beasts, of every denomination, shall resort to her extensive ruins. They shall be "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit;" "the cage of every unclean and hateful bird *."

15. There too these birds shall make their lasting habitation, where they shall rear their young in security, and shall fear no annoyance from man.

16, 17. Ye who live in those times, when this prophecy shall be accomplished, consult the word of God, compare the event with the predictions concerning it; you shall find these fulfilled most minutely, none of the birds or beasts here mentioned, shall be wanting, nor shall any female among them lack her mate. For JEHOVAH, whose kingdom ruleth over all, hath decreed it; he hath revealed it by his prophets, and shall accomplish it by his Spirit, gathering these birds and beasts, at the time appointed, to the place ordained for

11. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it, the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.

12. They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

13. And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof; and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.

14. The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech-owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.

15. There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow; there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.

16. Seek ye out of the book of the Lord, and read; no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate; for my mouth it hath commanded, and his Spirit it hath gathered them.

17. And he hath
cast the lot for them,
and his hand hath di-
vided unto them by
line: they shall possess
it for ever; from ge-
neration to generation
shall they dwell there-

them. Nor can they be turned out of it, by the efforts of men, because God himself hath given them possession. He hath adjudged that country to be their residence, as if the lot were cast for it; he hath allotted to each individual among them, his place, as by a measuring line. He hath decreed, that they shall possess it for ever, that they shall dwell in it, so long as the earth remains.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter is a continuation of the same section of prophecy, begun in the preceding. As the former represented the destruction of the enemies of religion, immediately before the millenium; this describes the happiness of the church, during the millenium, in consequence of the deliverance obtained, by the destruction of her enemies.

In ver. 1, 2. the prophet gives a general description of the fruitfulness, beauty, and happiness of the church, by images borrowed from the natural world.

In ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. he intimates the efficacy of the true religion, (manifested, in some degree, at all times, but especially during the millennium) to remove spiritual infirmities and maladies of every kind, of which the Messiah should give a proof in his day, by healing mens bodily infirmities; for ver. 5, 6. are applied by our Saviour to his own miracles, and alleged as evidences of his divine mission, to the disciples of John the Baptist, Mat. xi. 4, 5.

In ver. 7, 8, 9. he describes the holiness of the millennial church.

In ver. 10. he intimates the conversion and return of the Jews to their own land, as a part of the glory of the church at the millenium.

THE TEXT.

1. The wilderness
and the solitary place
shall be glad for them;
and the desert shall re-
joice, and blossom as
the rose.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. In consequence of the destruction of these enemies, the nations that were held in bondage by them, shall rejoice in the deliverance afforded. They shall receive likewise the knowledge of the true religion, and abound in those graces and virtues, that are ornamental and profitable to men. Though they were, in former ages, neglected and unproductive as the desert waste; they shall now resemble a well cultivated garden, abounding with fruits and flowers.

2. The knowledge of religion shall spread far, and operate powerfully; and the happiness of mankind, consequent upon it, shall increase. Men shall be raised above the grovelling pursuits of sin and sense, as Lebanon is exalted above the plain. They shall abound in the fruits of righteousness, as the fertile fields of Carmel in the fruits of the earth. They shall be adorned with the beauty of holiness, and recommend it sweetly but powerfully to others, as the vale of Sharon is beautiful and fragrant, when its roses are in blow; and all this shall be effected, by the view they shall receive of JEHOVAH, in his ordinances, and by the excellency of his favour, which they shall taste in communion with him.

3. The word of God preached, when the kingdom of the Messiah is established, shall be accompanied with a divine power, healing the spiritual maladies of men, however great and various. To those who are feeble in the performance of duty, it will communicate strength; into those who are faint in pleading with God, it will infuse confidence.

4. Those who are timid, it will inspire with courage, removing the grounds of their fears, by weighty arguments; saying with power, Your God who supports you, is greater than all that oppose you; he hath decreed vengeance for your enemies, which shall be executed; he hath appointed eternal salvation for you, which shall be bestowed; he will come at the time appointed, and confer it.

5. The same divine word shall be effectual to convert those who were formerly strangers to God, and the true religion. The eye of the understanding, that was blind with prejudice and error, shall be enlightened, to discern the truth with conviction; the ear of the soul, once deaf to the call of God, shall now hear it readily, and yield to it cheerfully;

6. The man who was formerly unable to walk in the way which God has marked out, being lame through the influence of his own irregular passions, shall now run rejoicing in the way of God's commandments, leaping over the difficul-

2. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice, even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.

3. Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

4. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence: he will come and save you.

5. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

6. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

ties that occur, like the bounding hart. While the man who was once ignorant of the truth of God, and incapable of manifesting it to others, shall now be eloquent in God's praise.

As a proof of these glorious effects, to be produced universally, by the word preached, in due time, the Messiah shall, in his time, heal mens bodily infirmities by a word, causing the blind to see, the deaf to hear, the lame to walk, and the dumb to speak. In the latter days, divine grace, accompanying the word preached, shall be abundantly and extensively bestowed on nations formerly neglected. It shall resemble waters bursting forth in the wilderness, and torrents refreshing the desert, to make them fruitful.

7. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water : in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grafs, with reeds and rushes.

7. Though the schemes of wise men in former ages, were insufficient to promote the reformation, and secure the happiness of mankind ; so that they who trusted to them were deceived, like travellers through the desert, who mistake the glowing sand for a pool of water * ; or like the caravans, who, resting in a dry place, are bit by the serpents that haunt it : But in the Messiah's reign, the word and Spirit of God bestowed in the ordinances of the gospel, shall effectually promote the reformation, and secure the true happiness of mankind ; and so may be fitly compared to the glowing sand converted into a pool of water, to refresh the thirsty traveller ; or to bubbling fountains springing up in a dry place, chasing the serpents from their haunt, and producing abundance of pasture, for the camels that carry the travellers †.

* **שֶׁרָב** This word is Arabic as well as Hebrew, expressing in both languages the same thing ; the glowing sandy plain, which, in hot countries, at a distance, has the appearance of water. It occurs in the Koran, chap. xxiv. " But as to the unbelievers, their works are like a vapour in a plain, which the thirsty traveller thinketh to be water, until, when he cometh there, he findeth it to be nothing." Mr Salis' note in this place is, " The Arabic word **Serab**, signifies that false appearance, which in the eastern countries, is often seen in sandy plains about noon, resembling a large lake of water in motion, and is occasioned

by the reverberation of the sun's beams. It sometimes tempts thirsty travellers out of their way, but deceives them when they come near, either going forward, (for it always appears at the same distance) or quite vanishes.

Lowth's translation of Isaiah, notes on the place.

† I have considered the metaphors of the prophet, as referring to the conveniency of travellers through the desert, rather than to the fertility of the soil ; not only from the note of the learned Bishop, inserted above, which shews the aptness of the metaphors ; but in regard, a fertile soil could

8. The divine precepts shall be so clear, the motives that enforce them so powerful, the multitudes that obey them so great, that the manner of obtaining eternal happiness shall appear clearly, and be followed safely; as if the king's high-way were made through the sandy desert, to direct the traveller. It may be called the way of holiness, because that is the qualification which the Divine precepts require to attain eternal happiness; and they who are willing to walk in this way shall not be turned aside from it, either by the contagious example of the wicked; for then there shall be none: nor yet by their own infirmities and corruptions; for the king who leads his people to the sanctuary above, by this way, shall be present with them*, by his grace to assist them, by his Providence to protect them.

9. Neither shall they be driven from it, by the persecutions prevalent in former ages, when tyrants and oppressors, like lions and ravenous wild beasts, haunting the king's high-way, made it desolate; for then there shall be no persecution, and they that are redeemed by the blood of Christ, and sanctified by his Spirit, may follow after holiness, without molestation.

10. Then too, the seed of Israel, whom JEHOVAH formerly delivered out of Egypt, shall be again redeemed from their sins, and from their sufferings: they shall turn to God with their whole heart, and so they shall be admitted members of the church, and be restored to the possession of their land. They shall be filled with a "joy that is unspeakable in believing;" the earnest of that fulness of joy which is in God's more immediate presence, and endures throughout the endless ages of eternity. They shall likewise experience temporal joy for their restoration, which shall never be interrupted by another captivity,

8. And an high-way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those: the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

9. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there,

10. And the ransom of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

be converted by the husbandman to a more valuable purpose, than being made a pool of water; and could produce many more valuable crops, than grass with reeds and rushes. But nothing can be conceived more valuable, or more desirable to travellers through the desert, than pools of water and abundance of pasture for their camels.

This interpretation, likewise, avoids a coincidence with the last clause of the preceding verse, which would make this an useless tautology.

* "It shall be for those" is properly translated by Lowth, "He shall be with them in the way."

and which shall wipe away the remembrance of those painful sorrows they endured, and those sighs they uttered in their long calamitous dispersion.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS and the three following chapters give a historical account of Senacherib's invasion and defeat; of Hezekiah's sickness and recovery; and of the reception given by Hezekiah to the messengers of the king of Babylon. That all these historical facts were penned and inserted by Isaiah himself, we may warrantably conclude, from 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. where the historian refers the reader to the prophecy of Isaiah, for further light on Hezekiah's reign.

The narrative concerning Senacherib, is inserted here, not only to illustrate some of the preceding prophecies, whose sole object is to predict his invasion, but likewise to illustrate more remote events foretold, which should have a striking affinity to the case of Senacherib, as well as to confirm the faith of the people of God respecting these remote events, by shewing them the exact accomplishment of the predictions relating to their own times.

That men may learn to reverence the authority of God in his word, and to believe that all prophecies he hath delivered shall be accomplished in their season, observe the manner in which his predictions concerning the king of Assyria were verified.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Senacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the defended cities of Judea, and took them.

2. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh, from Lachish to Jerusalem, unto king Hezekiah, with a great army; and he stood by the conduit of the upper pool, in the high-way of the fuller's field.

1. In the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Senacherib, king of Assyria, invaded Judea, and succeeded so far as to take all the fortified cities he attacked.

2. While the king of Assyria was employed in besieging Lachish, he dispatched Rabshakeh, one of his generals, with a considerable part of his army, to attack Jerusalem; but commanded him to deliver a message to king Hezekiah, before he should attack the city. Rabshakeh came to Jerusalem, and halted close by the conduit of the upper pool, which supplies the city with water.

on the high-way which leads to the field where the fullers set their clothes a-drying, after they have washed them.

3. Upon his arrival, Hezekiah sent three of his principal servants to confer with him, Eliakim, the son of Hilkiah, the steward of the household, Shebna the scribe, and Joash, the son of Asaph, the recorder.

4. In conference with these men, Rabshakeh delivered a proud message sent by the king of Assyria, thus: "Go and report to your master, Hezekiah, the message which my master, the king of Assyria, hath sent by me. Thus saith the great king, to whom so many petty kings are tributary, I consider you, Hezekiah, as my vassal; and your resistance to my arms as rebellion. I would ask you therefore, What ground of confidence you have, that your resistance shall be successful?"

5. "Your resistance shews that you flatter yourself with having counsel and strength for carrying on the war; but the event will shew, that your expectations, however founded, are vain.

6. "I know you build much on your alliance with the king of Egypt, but he may be fitly compared to a broken reed, on which, if a man lean as on a staff to support him, it breaks and pierces the hand that leaned upon it, thus increasing the injury of the person's fall. Pharaoh has at all times, through treachery or infirmity, failed of performing his engagements to his allies.

7. "But if ye say, We rely on the protection of JEHOVAH our God, consider that Hezekiah hath greatly offended JEHOVAH. Is he not that God whose altars Hezekiah hath pulled down, whose high places he hath destroyed, obliging the whole inhabitants of Judah, as well as the people of Jerusalem, to worship before one altar at Jerusalem? You cannot therefore reasonably expect his protection*.

* Wicked men are so ignorant in matters of religion, that, like Rabshakeh, they charge the very piety of the people of God upon them as a crime. In destroying the high places and altars of JEHOVAH, that

the people might worship before the altar of Jerusalem only, Hezekiah acted expressly according to the law, and carried the reformation of his times much further than his predecessors had done; for the

3. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joash, Asaph's son, the recorder.

4. And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest?

5. I say, sayest thou (but they are but vain words), I have counsel and strength for war now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me?

6. Lo thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt whereon, if a man lean it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to all that trust in him.

7. But if thou sayest to me, We trust in the Lord our God; is not he whose high places, and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?

8. Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able, on thy part, to set riders upon them.

9. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen.

10. And am I now come up without the Lord, against this land, to destroy it? the Lord said unto me, Go up against this land, and destroy it.

11. Then said Eliakim, and Shebna, and Joah, unto Rabshakeh, Speak, I pray thee, unto thy servants in the Syrian language, for we understand it; and speak not to us in the Jews language, in the ears of the people that are on the wall.

12. But Rabshakeh said, Hath my master sent me to thy master, and to thee, to speak these words? hath he not sent me to the men

8. "But if you place your confidence in your own resources, how contemptible are these, in comparison of the resources of my master, the king of Assyria! Where is your cavalry? Give hostages to my master, or pledges equal to their value, and he will give you two thousand horses, provided you are able to set riders on them.

9. "How is it possible then, with such despicable resources, to resist even the smallest detachment, commanded by the meanest captain of my master's army? though you should receive the chariots and horsemen you expect from your faithless ally, the king of Egypt.

10. "And as to your reliance on JEHOVAH, do you imagine that I have invaded this land without a commission from him, for that purpose? Surely not; JEHOVAH expressly commanded me to lead an army against this land of Judea, and to destroy it *."

11. As Rabshakeh delivered this message in the language of the Jews, with an elevated tone of voice, the ambassadors of Hezekiah, Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, fearing the people who defended the wall might hear his words, and be intimidated, interrupted him in a respectful manner, saying, "We entreat that you will not speak to us in the Hebrew dialect, in the hearing of the people that are on the wall of the city, but in the language of the Syrians, for your servants understand it; and it is customary with ambassadors who treat of peace, to propose the conditions privately among themselves, and then only to make a public declaration, and appeal to the people at large, when the negotiation is broken off."

12. But Rabshakeh haughtily answered, "Has my master, the king of Assyria, sent me to treat of a peace, with your master Hezekiah, and with you his ambassadors, and not rather to make a public declaration, to the men that defend the ci-

Spirit of God observes, of some of his predecessors, that though they destroyed the altars of Baal, the high places were not taken away.

* I consider Rabshakeh here as asserting what he knew to be false, merely to intimidate the people with whom he conversed.

The heathens frequently invoked the deities of the nation on whom they made war, requesting them to leave their former worshippers, and come over to them; and no doubt frequently asserted they did so, to intimidate their enemies.

ty, and to assure them, that if they continue to resist, they shall, in consequence of a siege, be brought to the necessity of eating their own excrements, and drinking their own urine, as well as you?"

13. Then Rabshakeh standing up, and elevating his voice to be the better heard, addressed himself to the people that were on the wall, in the Hebrew dialect, thus, in order to excite them to an insurrection against Hezekiah's government: "Hear ye the message of the great king, the king of Assyria. Thus saith the king:

14. "Let not Hezekiah deceive you with an opinion, that you may successfully resist my forces; for he is not able to protect you against them.

15. "And let not Hezekiah persuade you to trust in JEHOVAH, so far as to resist me, saying, JEHOVAH shall surely deliver us; this city shall not be given up into the hand of the king of Assyria:

16. "Do not believe Hezekiah, nor obey his orders for defending the city; but accept of the terms offered by the king of Assyria. For thus saith the king of Assyria, Make peace with me, open the gates of the city, and surrender at discretion; you shall have in the mean time, under my protection, all the advantages which you usually enjoy in time of peace. Every one shall eat of his own vine, and of his own fig-tree: every one shall drink water out of his own cistern.

17. "And when I come to take you away from this land, it is in order to bring you to a land equally fertile, where corn is reared, and vineyards are planted; where you may eat bread, and drink wine in abundance.

18. "Nor let Hezekiah seduce you, saying, JEHOVAH will deliver us. Have the gods of the nations delivered, each his own land, from the hand of the king of Assyria?

19. "Where are the gods of Hamath and of Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim?

that sit upon the wall, that they may eat their own dung, and drink their own piss with you.

13. Then Rabshakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice, in the Jews language, and said, Hear ye the words of the great king, the king of Assyria:

14: Thus saith the king: Let not Hezekiah deceive you, for he shall not be able to deliver you;

15. Neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying, The Lord will surely deliver us; this city shall not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria.

16. Hearken not to Hezekiah; for thus saith the king of Assyria, Make an agreement with me by a present, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine, and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern;

17. Until I come, and take you away to a land like your own, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18. Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land, out of the hand of the king of Assyria?

19. Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are

the gods of Sephar-
aim? and have they
delivered Samaria out
of my hand?

20. Who are they
amongst all the gods
of these lands, that
have delivered their
land out of my hand?
that the Lord should
deliver Jerusalem out
of my hand.

21. But they held
their peace, and an-
swered him not a word;
for the king's com-
mandment was, say-
ing, Answer him not.

22. Then came Eli-
akim, the son of Hil-
kiah, that was over
the household, and
Shebna the scribe, and
Joah, the son of Asaph
the recorder, to Heze-
kiah, with their clothes
rent, and told him the
words of Rabshakeh.

Have the gods of Samaria delivered it out of my
hand?

20. "Who are there among all the gods of these
lands, that have delivered their own lands out of
my hand? that JEHOVAH should deliver out of
my hand Jerusalem."

21. And the people on the wall, as well as He-
zekiah's ambassadors, held their peace, and an-
swered him not a word: for the king had com-
manded, in case he should blaspheme, not to an-
swer him, lest they should provoke him to utter
more blasphemy.

22. Then Eliakim the son of Hilkiah, the stew-
ard of the household, and Shebna the scribe, and
Joah the son of Asaph, the recorder, returned to
Hezekiah, with their clothes rent, in testimony of
their grief for the blasphemy uttered, and the
danger that threatened their country; and report-
ed unto him the words of Rabshakeh.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. And it came to
pass, when king Heze-
kiah heard it, that he
rent his clothes, and
covered himself with
sackcloth, and went
into the house of the
Lord.

2. And he sent Eli-
akim, who was over
the household, and
Shebna the scribe, and
some of the elders of the priests,
covered with sack-
cloth, unto Isaiah the
prophet, the son of
Amos.

3. And they said
unto him, Thus saith

1. And when king Hezekiah heard it, he rent
his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, in
testimony of his sorrow, as well for the blasphe-
my of Rabshakeh, as for his own sins and those of
his people, the procuring causes of the impending
judgment; and he went to the house of JEHOVAH,
to make his confession, and offer up his supplica-
tions before him.

2. And he sent Eliakim the steward, Shebna
the scribe, and some of the elders of the priests,
all covered with sackcloth, with a message to Isaiah,
the son of Amos, the prophet.

3. They said to Isaiah, "The king Hezekiah
hath sent us to represent the situation of the land,

and to request the aid of your prayers and counsels. The present is a period of peculiar distress. We are threatened with vengeance by our enemies. God himself is blasphemed, while we are altogether unable to defend ourselves, or to vindicate his honour: our situation is similar to that of a woman in her pangs, who, when the time of her delivery is come, hath lost her strength, so that she is not able to bring forth, and yet, without strength to bring forth, death is the inevitable consequence.

4. "O that JEHOVAH thy God would hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom his lord, the king of Assyria, hath sent to reproach the living God; and that he would refute the words which JEHOVAH thy God hath heard, by shewing himself superior to the gods of the nations, with whom he was blasphemously compared, and able to defend this land against all the power of the king of Assyria; and do thou offer up thy prayer, for the poor remains of this people, that JEHOVAH may interpose."

5. When the servants of the king had delivered this message to the prophet,

6. Isaiah in answer said unto them, Report to your lord the king, the message which I have received from God. Thus saith JEHOVAH, "Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me."

7. "Behold I will send a spirit, and not any of the human race, to punish him; so that when the report of his slaughtered army is brought to him, he will suddenly withdraw the remainder of his forces from you, and return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land."

8. But Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria besieging Libnah; for he had heard that he had decamped from Lachish.

9. And when Senacherib had received advice

Hezekiah, This day is a day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy; for the children are come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring forth.

4. It may be the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the king of Assyria, his master, hath sent to reproach the living God, and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard, wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left.

5. So the servants of the king Hezekiah came to Isaiah.

6. And Isaiah said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, Report to your master, Thus saith the Lord, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, wherewith the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me.

7. Behold I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and return to his own land: and I will cause him to fall by the sword, in his own land.

8. So Rabshakeh returned, and found the king of Assyria was lying against Libnah: for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish.

9. And he heard

ay concerning Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, He is come for to make war against thee; and when he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying,

10. Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah, king of Judah, saying, Let not thy God, in whom thou trustest, deceive thee, saying, Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.

11. Behold, thou hast heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, by destroying them utterly; and shalt thou be delivered?

12. Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden, which were in Telassar?

13. Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivah?

14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it: and Hezekiah went up into the house of the Lord, and spread it before the Lord.

15. And Hezekiah prayed unto the Lord, saying,

16. O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth.

concerning Tirhakah king of Cush, that he was advancing to give him battle; finding it impossible to go immediately and besiege Jerusalem, he sent messengers again to Hezekiah, and charged them,

10. Thus shall ye say to Hezekiah, king of Judah: "Let not thy God, in whom thou confidest, deceive thee, by assuring thee that Jerusalem shall not be given up into the hand of the king of Assyria."

11. "Thou hast certainly heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all lands, which they have utterly destroyed, and shalt thou be delivered?"

12. "Have the gods of the nations delivered those which my fathers have destroyed? Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the sons of Eden, which were in Telassar?"

13. "Where is the king of Hamath, and the king of Arphad, and the king of the city of Sepharvaim, of Hena, and of Ivah?" These messengers of the king of Assyria, carried likewise a letter from Sennacherib to Hezekiah, containing the same message in writing.

14. And Hezekiah received the letter from the hand of the messengers, and read it. Then he went up to (the house of JEHOVAH) the temple, and having spread out the letter open, as presenting it in a solemn manner before JEHOVAH;

15. Hezekiah prayed, saying,

16. O JEHOVAH, God of hosts, thou God of Israel, who hath promised to meet with thy people, and to commune with them from the mercy-seat that is between the cherubims, the symbol of thy peculiar presence and residence among us. Thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; for thou hast made the heavens and

the earth. Thou hast therefore authority and power to overrule all the events that take place in them.

17. O JEHOVAH, do thou consider and judge according to righteousness, these words of Senacherib, known to thy omniscience, by which he hath blasphemed thee, the living God.

18, 19. In truth, O JEHOVAH, the kings of Assyria have destroyed all the nations and their lands, and have cast their gods into the fire; for they were not gods, but the work of the hand of man, wood and stone, therefore they have destroyed them.

20. And now, O JEHOVAH, our God, save us, we beseech thee, from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou JEHOVAH art the only living and true God."

21. Then Isaiah, the son of Amos, sent unto Hezekiah, the following message: Thus saith JEHOVAH, the God of Israel, Thy prayer unto me, concerning Senacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.

22. This is the declaration of JEHOVAH concerning him, in answer to it. You, O Senacherib, consider the inhabitants of Jerusalem, as women unable to resist you; you resolve to treat them despitefully, as a ravisher treats a virgin; but they shall in the end despise your efforts to subdue them, ridicule your boasting, and express their contempt of your threatenings.

23. Consider who is that being of whom you have expressed your contempt, and against whom you have uttered blasphemy, in an open and insolent manner, with a loud voice and a proud look? Is he not the living and true God, connected with Israel by covenant?

24. By the message your servants delivered, you have certainly reproached JEHOVAH, in ascri-

17. Incline thine ear, O Lord, and hear; open thine eyes, O Lord, and see; and hear all the words of Senacherib, which he hath sent to reproach the living God.

18. Of a truth, Lord, the kings of Assyria have laid waste all the nations, and their countries;

19. And have cast their gods into the fire, for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone; therefore they have destroyed them.

20. Now therefore, O Lord our God, save us from his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know, that thou art the Lord, even thou only.

21. Then Isaiah, the son of Amos, sent unto Hezekiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Whereas thou hast prayed to me, against Senacherib king of Assyria:

22. This is the word which the Lord hath spoken concerning him, The virgin, the daughter of Zion, hath despised thee, and laughed thee to scorn; the daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her head at thee.

23. Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice, and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the holy One of Israel.

24. By thy servants hast thou reproached

the Lord, and hast said,
by the multitude of
my chariots am I come
up to the height of
the mountains, to the
sides of Lebanon, and
will cut down the
all cedars thereof, and
the choice fir-trees
thereof; and I will en-
ter into the height of
his border, and the fo-
rest of his Carmel.

25. I have digged,
and drunk water; and
with the sole of my
feet have I dried up
all the rivers of the be-
sieged places.

26. Hast thou not
heard long ago, how I
have done it; and of
ancient times, that I
have formed it? Now
have I brought it to
pass, that thou shouldst
be to lay waste defen-
ced cities into ruinous
heaps.

27. Therefore their
inhabitants were of
small power, they were
slain and con-
founded: they were as
the grass of the field,

bing your past successes to yourself alone, whereas they were owing to his overruling providence; and in threatening to subdue the land of Judah, which is peculiarly under his protection. You have said, I have by my own wisdom and bravery subdued kingdoms, though the attempt appeared as impossible as that of driving a multitude of chariots up steep ascents, to the height of the mountains. I will subdue the kingdom of Judah, and take the city of Jerusalem, though it seem inaccessible as Lebanon. I will destroy the princes and nobles of Judah, that resemble the tall cedars and choice fir-trees of Lebanon. I will penetrate into the fortified cities, and seize upon the riches of the inhabitants, notwithstanding they are under the protection of JEHOVAH*.

25. I have extricated myself out of difficulties, that were apparently unsurmountable; when my army was ready to perish for thirst in the desert, I have dug for water, and procured it, where no man had ever seen water before. I have taken fortified cities, and cut off all the resources of my enemies for defence, as easily as I marched my army towards them; for how soon I presented myself before them, they immediately surrendered.

26. But there is a truth, O Senacherib, of which you are ignorant, though your reason might have suggested it, or traditions might have discovered it: That all events which take place in this world, are disposed of by me, the self-existent and the sovereign Ruler. I have decreed them from all eternity, by my counsel. I accomplish them, at the time appointed, by my providence. Among those events of old, decreed and now accomplished, this is one, that you should exist, and be a scourge in my hand, to lay waste warlike nations, and destroy fenced cities.

27. Therefore their inhabitants were of small strength to resist you: they were as easily subdued as the grass of the field or the green herb is mowed down; their schemes were disconcerted, and proved like the grass of the house top, which wi-

* I consider the pronoun *his* frequently repeated in this verse, to refer to JEHOVAH, and it is certainly a just account of Sena- cherib's message, where he repeatedly cautions the Jews against trusting in JEHOVAH.

thers before it arrives at perfection. Their efforts for defence were counteracted, and resembled the corn which is blasted before it ripens.

28. But now be assured, that the minutest circumstance respecting you, is well known to me, whose presence fills immensity; and that I have attended to your blasphemous rage against me, expressed in your message to Hezekiah.

29. Because your rage against me is great and conspicuous, I will deal with you as a fisherman does with a fish, when he fixes a hook in his nose, he drags him violently whither he pleases; or as a rider deals with a horse, when he puts a bridle in his jaws, he restrains him forcibly from the way in which he intended to go. Thus will I forcibly restrain you from the attack you meditate against Jerusalem, and violently drive you back from this land you have invaded, to the land from which you set out.

30. As a sign to you, Hezekiah, that God shall accomplish these threatenings, denounced against Senacherib: Notwithstanding this year's crop is, in a great measure, destroyed by your enemies, and that the following is the sabbatical year, he shall sustain you and your people these two years, by the spontaneous produce of the soil; and on the third year, ye shall be delivered from the alarms, as well as the depredations occasioned by your enemies; so that ye may sow and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit without molestation.

31. Then such of the Jews as remain and escape this invasion of Senacherib, shall increase in numbers, shall be firmly established in their civil and religious liberties, and shall bring forth the fruits of holiness; resembling a tree carefully cultivated, that strikes the root downward, and brings forth fruit upward.

32. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem that escape, far from being confined as at present within the walls, and requiring the fortifications of mount Zion for their defence, shall have free egress and regress. The zeal of JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, for his own glory, shall effect this.

and as the green herb, as the grass on the house tops, and as corn blasted before it be grown up.

28. But I know thy abode, and thy going out, and thy coming in, and thy rage against me.

29. Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult, is come up into mine ears: therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest.

30. And this shall be a sign unto thee, ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year, that which springeth of the same; and in the third year, sow ye and reap; and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof.

31. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah, shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

32. For out of Jerusalem shall go forth a remnant, and they that escape out of mount Zion; the zeal of the Lord of hosts shall do this.

The tranquillity and happiness, which the Jews that escape from Senacherib shall enjoy after his defeat, may be considered as an earnest of more glorious times, in which the Jews shall be delivered from an enemy more formidable than Senacherib, shall be firmly established in all their privileges, and shall produce abundantly the fruits of holiness; when missionaries from their nation, commissioned by the church among them, shall preach the gospel successfully among the heathen. The zeal which JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler, hath for his own glory, shall accomplish the more remote, as well as the nearer event*.

33. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not come into this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shields, nor cast a bank against it.

34. By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city, saith the Lord.

35. For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake.

36. Then the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, an hundred and fourscore and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning, behold they were all dead corpses.

33. As a further consolation to Hezekiah, JEHOVAH said concerning the king of Assyria, He shall not enter into this city, Jerusalem; nor shall he appear with his forces before it, nor shall he attempt either to storm it or besiege it.

34. By the way in which he came to invade this land, by the same shall he return to his own land; and into this city he shall not enter, saith JEHOVAH.

35. For I will protect this city, to deliver it, for my own sake; because I have made choice of it to put my name there, and for the sake of David my servant, to whom I promised, that his seed should sit upon his throne.

36. Now the prophecy concerning Senacherib, was fulfilled in this manner: When his army, after the defeat of Tirhakah king of Cush, was marching to Jerusalem, the angel of JEHOVAH went forth in the night, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians, 185,000 men; so that when the rest of the army, that escaped the slaughter, arose early in the morning, behold these 185,000 were all dead corpses.

* I consider the 31st and 32d verses, as having a double meaning; because the description of the happiness of the Jews, is too pompous if confined to Hezekiah's time, for that period of tranquility was of short continuance, and followed by great calamities. Again, the remnant going forth

from Jerusalem and mount Zion, suggests something more than a deliverance from the siege. Further, this double meaning makes the history of Senacherib, a key to the prophecies of this book, that look beyond his time, particularly to chapter xiv.

37. Senacherib, fearing that he himself and the remains of his forces would be cut off, by another stroke of the same kind; or that being few in number, they would be overpowered by the Jewish forces, hastily decamped, departed from Judea, returned to his own land, and dwelt at Nineveh.

38. A short time after his return *, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, Adrammelech and Sharezer, his two eldest sons, smote him with the sword, and they escaped into the land of Armenia, and Ezar-haddon, his third son, reigned in his stead.

37. So Senacherib, king of Assyria, departed, and went, and returned, and dwelt at Nineveh.

38. And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god, that Adrammelech and Sharezer, his sons, smote him with the sword: and they escaped into the land of Armenia, and Ezar-haddon, his son, reigned in his stead.

* About four years, according to Prideaux.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter contains an account of Hezekiah's sickness; his miraculous recovery, and the song of thanksgiving which he wrote on that occasion. His sickness happened in the fourteenth year of his reign, the year that Senacherib invaded Judea.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The same year which Senacherib invaded Judea, Hezekiah was seized with a sickness, which, in the ordinary course of nature, would prove mortal. And Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, came unto him with a message from God, for the trial of his faith, and said unto him, JEHOVAH hath commanded you, Give orders concerning the affairs of your family; for you must die, you shall live no longer.

2. Hezekiah, upon receiving this message, turned his face to the wall, by which his bed was placed, in order to address God in secret, without interruption from the persons that were in his bed-chamber, and prayed to JEHOVAH, and said,

3. I beseech thee, O JEHOVAH, remember now,

THE TEXT.

1. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death: and Isaiah the prophet, the son of Amos, came unto him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live.

2. Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord,

3. And said, Re-

Remember now, O Lord, beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight: and Hezekiah wept sore.

4. Then came the word of the Lord, to Isaiah, saying,

5. Go and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: Behold I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

6. And I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city.

22. Hezekiah also said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?

7. And this shall be a sign unto thee from the Lord, that the Lord will do this thing that he hath spoken.

8. Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun-dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward: so the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down.

21. For Isaiah had said, Let them take a lump of figs, and lay it

how I have endeavoured to walk before thee in truth, and with a sincere heart, and have done that which is acceptable in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept and lamented bitterly.

4. Now, before Isaiah was gone into the middle court of the king's palace, he received from JEHOVAH this message.

5. Go back and say unto Hezekiah, Thus saith JEHOVAH, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy supplication, I have seen thy tears: Behold I will heal thee, and on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of JEHOVAH, and I will add unto thy days fifteen years.

6. And I will deliver thee and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will protect this city.

22. And Hezekiah said, By what sign shall I know that I shall go up unto the house of JEHOVAH on the third day?

7. And Isaiah said, This shall be the sign unto thee from JEHOVAH, that JEHOVAH will bring to effect this word which he hath spoken. (2 Kings xx. 9.) Shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go backward ten degrees on the degrees of Ahaz? (ver. 10.) Hezekiah answered, It appears to me an easy matter, for the shadow to go forward ten degrees, but if it return backward ten degrees, I shall reckon it a miracle, and a sign of my recovery.

8. 21. And Isaiah said, Behold JEHOVAH will bring back the shadow of the degrees by which the shadow is gone down in the degrees of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. (ver. 11.) And Isaiah prayed unto JEHOVAH, and the sun returned backwards ten degrees, on the degrees by which it had gone down. And Isaiah said, Let them take a lump of figs, and they bruised them, and applied them to the boils, and he recovered.

9. The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, which he wrote upon the occasion of his sickness and recovery.

10. When my days were just going to be cut off, I said with sorrow and regret, I shall pass through the gates of the grave, I am deprived of the residue of my years.

11. I said with sorrow and regret, I shall no more behold JEHOVAH, even JEHOVAH, in the land of the living; I shall no longer behold man with the inhabitants of the world.

12. My continuance here is like that of the Arabian shepherd in the wilderness, who after a few days strikes his tent and removes. My life passes swifter than a weaver's shuttle: after a few more threads are added, the web is done and severed from the loom; so after a few more days he will cut me off with this pining sickness. Both day and night, O JEHOVAH, thy hand lieth heavy on me, and thou wilt make an end of me.

13. During the night I roared like a lion with pain until the morning, he did so break to pieces all my bones; but in the morning I received no ease. Both day and night thy hand, O JEHOVAH, lieth heavy on me, and thou wilt make an end of me.

14. When I addressed God in prayer, I could not order my speech before him, but chattered incoherently like a swallow or crane; neither could I fix my thoughts, but made a moaning complaint, without sentiment, like the dove. I looked upward, but mine eyes have failed, through weakness and want of hope. O JEHOVAH, my situation is distressing, be thou surety for me.

15. How shall I express my thankfulness? JEHOVAH hath deigned to speak to me; he hath given me a promise, and he hath performed it. Through the remainder of my years will I reflect on this bitterness of my soul.

for a plaster upon the boil, and he shall recover.

9. The writing of Hezekiah, king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.

10. I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave; I am deprived of the residue of my years.

11. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world.

12. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off, like a weaver, my life; he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.

13. I reckoned till morning, that as a lion so will he break all my bones; from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me.

14. Like a crane, or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove; mine eyes fail with looking upwards: O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.

15. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years, in the bitterness of my soul.

16. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit; wilt thou recover me, and make me to live.

17. Behold for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul, delivered me from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back.

18. For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

19. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.

20. The Lord was ready to save me; therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments, all the days of our life, in the house of the Lord.

16. O my Lord, it is through fellowship with thee that men live, and in these interviews with thee, consists the life of my spirit. Thou hast not only recovered me, but made me spiritually alive.

17. Behold my bitter distress is changed into tranquillity of mind. Thou hast rescued my soul from destruction, for thou hast pardoned all my sins.

18. What reasons have I to be thankful, when I compare my situation with that of others. For they that go down to the grave cannot thank thee on earth; nor can the dead praise thee among the living; and as for them who are plunged in eternal destruction, they cannot hope for thy mercy, according to thy word.

19. He who lives spiritually, as well as temporally, is the person fitted to praise thee, as I do this day. Yea, and fathers shall make known thy truth to their children, in imitation of my example, whose life thou hast prolonged for the benefit of others.

20. JEHOVAH was present to save me, therefore will we sing our songs to the harp, all the days of our life in the house of JEHOVAH.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter gives an account of the reception which Hezekiah gave the ambassadors of the king of Babylon, and the message which God sent to him by the prophet Isaiah, in consequence of that reception. The reception given the ambassadors indicated Hezekiah's pride of heart, for so it is explained, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25. "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem." The wrath threatened in the message sent him, is the Babylonish captivity.

It appears these messengers were sent from Babylon, a short time after Hezekiah's recovery, partly to congratulate the king, and partly to enquire into the miracle of the sun's retrograde motion; a phenomenon which the Chaldeans, famous for their knowledge of astronomy, had carefully noted. Thus we are told, that "the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon were sent unto him, to enquire of the wonder that was done in the land," 2 Chron. xxvii. 31.

THE PARAPHRASE,

1. At that time, Merodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, the king of Babylon, sent letters and ambassadors, and a present to Hezekiah; for he had heard that he had been sick and was recovered.

2. And Hezekiah rejoiced at their arrival, being proud at heart of the respect paid him; and in order to gratify this sentiment of pride, he shewed these ambassadors his magazines, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and his whole arsenal, and all that was contained in his treasures; there was not any thing in his house, and in all his dominion, that Hezekiah did not shew them: thus boasting of his prosperity, as if it were the acquisition of his own wisdom and merit, and not the free gift of the Almighty.

3. Then Isaiah the prophet came unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come unto me from a distant country, from Babylon,

4. And he said, What have they seen in thy house? And Hezekiah said, They have seen every thing in my house; there is nothing in my treasures which I have not shewn them; for he was unconscious of the pride which moved him.

5. In order therefore to rouse him to a sense of his sin, and to humble him, Isaiah said unto He-

THE TEXT.

1. At that time, Merodach Baladan, the son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent letters, and a present to Hezekiah; for he had heard that he had been sick and was recovered.

2. And Hezekiah was glad of them, and shewed them the house of his precious things, the silver and gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not.

3. Then came Isaiah the prophet unto king Hezekiah, and said unto him, What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee? And Hezekiah said, They are come from a far country unto me, even from Babylon.

4. Then said he, What have they seen in thine house? And Hezekiah answered, All that is in mine house have they seen, there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them.

5. Then said Isaiah to Hezekiah, Hear the

word of the Lord of
hosts.

6. Behold the days
come, that all that is
in thine house, and
that which thy fathers
have laid up in store
unto this day, shall be
carried to Babylon:
nothing shall be left,
saith the Lord.

7. And of thy sons
that shall issue from
thee, which thou shalt
beget, shall they take
away; and they shall
be eunuchs in the pa-
lance of the king of Ba-
bylon.

8. Then said Heze-
kiah to Isaiah, Good is
the word of the Lord
which thou hast spo-
ken: he said, more-
over, For there shall
be peace and truth in
my days.

zekiah, Hear thou the word of JEHOVAH, the God
of hosts.

6. Behold the days shall come, when all that is
in thy house, and that which thy fathers have
treasured up unto this day, shall be carried away
to Babylon; there shall not any thing be left,
saith JEHOVAH.

7. And of thy sons whom thou shalt beget,
shall they take: and they shall be eunuchs in the
palace of the king of Babylon.

8. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah, with beco-
ming submission and resignation, Gracious is the
word of JEHOVAH which thou hast delivered; for,
added he, there shall be peace, according to his
faithful promise, in my days.

THE [illegible] OF [illegible]

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P A R T II.

GENERAL ARGUMENT.

FROM the beginning of the fortieth chapter to the end of the book, it is one continued and connected prophecy, though it is divided into several sections. The scope and design is the same throughout.

Many commentators suppose, that the primary design of the spirit of prophecy is, to represent the return of the Jews from Babylon; allowing, however, that he has a further view to the times of the gospel. But I apprehend, that the sole design of the spirit of prophecy, in the whole of this discourse, is, to represent the times of the gospel; and that he has no view to the return from Babylon, either in a primary or secondary sense, except from the 27th verse of the xlv. chapter, to the 14th verse of the xlv. chapter, where he has the return from Babylon only in view, and which is introduced, as an episode, into an epic poem, connected with the subject, but interrupting the series of the narrative, to which he returns immediately when it is concluded. My reasons for this opinion are:

First, That many passages from this discourse are quoted in the New Testament, and applied to the times of the gospel. Now Christians must allow, that the Spirit of God is the best interpreter of his own expressions. But here it may be said, Are there not many

prophecies which have a two-fold meaning? and may not this be one of these? I allow, that several prophecies point to two different events at the same time; but I consider it as a rule, necessary to be observed in the interpretation of these, that *all* the expressions apply to *both* events. If we suppose, that some of the expressions are applicable to the first event, exclusive of the second, and others to the second event, exclusive of the first, we can never arrive at any certainty as to the meaning of the prophecy. It becomes a nose of wax, to which the interpreter may give a shape, according to his pleasure. Now if *all* the expressions ought to apply to *both* events, it is impossible that the prophet can have the return from Babylon in view; because the far greater number of his expressions cannot, by any effort of genius, be applied to that event; for they flatly contradict the representation of the historians who narrate it.

Secondly, If we apply the whole of this passage to the times of the gospel, the connection of its various parts may be traced throughout; but if we apply it to the return from Babylon, the connection is constantly interrupted; therefore, if the connection be a proper rule, whereby we ought to judge of the meaning, by that rule the application to the return from Babylon is excluded.

The spirit of prophecy in this discourse, represents the state of the church under the dispensation of the Messiah, and in order to that, gives several parallel views, of the period that extends from the first promulgation of the gospel, to the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah in the world.

That there are such parallel views or synchronisms in the Apocalypse, has been clearly demonstrated by Mede, in his *Clavis Apocalyptica*. That the same method should have been previously used by the prophet, under the influence of the same spirit, ought not to appear surprising, seeing this is the longest connected prophecy extant in the book of God, except the Apocalypse; and it refers to the same times with the Apocalypse.

That there are seven parallel views of the gospel times in this prophecy, will appear with sufficient evidence to the unprejudiced reader; he will be able likewise to distinguish each from the other, by attending to this observation, "That each parallel view begins with some account of the Messiah, or the circumstances of the time in which he appeared, and ends with an account of the millennium."

The first parallel view includes chap. xl. and xli. The second begins with chap. xlii. and ends with chap. xlviii. The third begins with chap. xlix. and ends with the 12th ver. of chap. lii. The fourth begins with the 13th ver. of chap. lii. and ends with the lx. chap. The fifth begins with the lxi. chap. and ends with the lxiv. chap. The sixth is contained in the lxv. chap. And the seventh in the lxvi. chap.

THE First PARALLEL VIEW of the Times of the Gospel,
including Chapters Fortieth and Forty-first.

C H A P T E R XL.

THE ARGUMENT.

AFTER a general intimation of the comfortable state of the church, in the latter days, ver. 1, 2. he proceeds to shew the progress of events towards that state. He begins with the ministry of John the Baptist, as the forerunner of the Messiah, ver. 3, 4.; he intimates the appearance of the Messiah, ver. 5.; and the sum of this doctrine, ver. 6, 7, 8.; he proceeds to the ministry of the apostles, shews the arguments used by them, to persuade men to submit to the Messiah, ver. 9, 10, 11.

Foreseeing the prejudices of the Jewish nation against the Messiah, he represents the arguments used by the apostles to remove them, ver. 12,—16.

He next represents the same heralds of the Messiah, turning to the heathen nations, requiring their submission, and expostulating with them on the vanity of idolatry, ver. 17,—26.

The prophet returns to the Jewish nation; he introduces God solemnly addressing them, declaring his interest in them, his power and willingness to deliver them, and bestow on them spiritual benefits, ver. 27,—31.

This address supposes the Jews to have continued a long time under great calamities; for they are represented as in a state of despondency, near to despair. This description suits not their condition in Babylon; it must refer to the close of their long dispersion, the period immediately preceding their conversion.

THE TEXT.

1. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

2. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Intimate, O ye heralds of the truth, in the name of God to his people, that they shall certainly receive great consolation.

2. Speak ye this animating truth to the church, declare it publicly, because it is clearly revealed, that her state shall be comfortable, in the latter days, when her warfare with the tyranny of this world shall be accomplished*; when her iniqui-

* In the Apocalypse, the church is represented as in a state of war, first with the dragon, and afterwards with the beast, until the battle of Armageddon, when the

ty shall be purged away, by the calamities she shall previously endure; when she shall have felt double the pain, in the punishment inflicted by JEHOVAH, to the pleasure which she experienced in her transgression*.

The progress of events towards the promised consolation, is as follows:

3. 4. A person † shall appear in the wilderness of Judea, publicly proclaiming the near approach of the Messiah, saying to the Jews, Prepare for his reception, who is JEHOVAH, our God. As a prince intending a visit to some distant corner of his dominions, dispatches a herald before him, exhorting the people to make the way for his reception, by filling up the vallies, levelling the mountains, making the crooked places straight, and the rough places plain; so this herald of the Messiah shall exhort men to prepare for his reception, whose kingdom is spiritual, by a thorough reformation of heart and life; by raising their minds above the grovelling pursuits of sin and sense; abasing their pride; foregoing their deceit; and subduing anger into meekness and gentleness.

5. Immediately after this proclamation, the Messiah, who is the brightness of his Father's glory, shall appear. He shall be visible to human eyes, by assuming the human nature ‡. This shall certainly be accomplished, for it is the truth

the Lord's hand, double for all her sins.

3. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert, a highway for our God.

4. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

5. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

warfare issues in a glorious victory, and the millennium commences. In Daniel chap. ii. the tyranny of the world is represented by a great image, consisting of four different metals, pointing out four universal monarchies, successively following each other; at length a stone cut out without hands, (that is the church) smote the image on the toes, (that is in the last state of the fourth monarchy), and became a mountain that filled the whole earth, ver. 35. In the viith chapter of Daniel, the tyranny of the world is represented by a wild beast, tearing mankind, and particularly the members of the church, with devouring teeth, and ruthless claws. Four beasts arise, one after another, to mark the four universal monarchies, successively following each other. At length the fourth beast appears with ten horns, corresponding to the ten toes of the image; after their existence for a limited time, the

fourth beast is slain, and then "the son of man takes the kingdom." In other words, "the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High," ver. 27. The same period mentioned in these three passages, is that intended by the prophet here, when the warfare of Jerusalem is accomplished.

* The end of God's chastisements is, to remove the love of sin from the heart; now the love of sin arises from the pleasure, real or imaginary, connected with the transgression; but the punishment inflicted for sin, occasioning double pain to the former pleasure, (though not equal to the desert of sin), detaches the heart from the love of it.

† Mat. iii. 3. Mark i. 3. Luke iii. 4. John i. 23.

‡ John i. 14.

so frequently declared by JEHOVAH, in his promises concerning "the seed of the woman," and "the seed of Abraham."

6. A divine voice addressed me, commanding me to proclaim the sum of the Messiah's doctrine, shewing the end of his coming into the world. As this was a matter of importance, I requested that God would again inform me, what I should proclaim. The same divine voice commanded me to proclaim, as the sum of the Messiah's doctrine, the inculcating on mankind their mortality, in order to their deliverance from it: That all men are made subject to death, in consequence of sin; so that each individual, and all the generations of mankind, may be fitly compared to the grass of the field; which in the morning groweth up and flourisheth, and in the evening is cut down and withereth.

7. Their glory and excellency are liable to sudden and unexpected destruction, by accidents which they cannot foresee or prevent; so that they resemble the flower of the grass, which is beautiful for a season, but when the scorching wind bloweth over it, it falls.

8. The uniform course of divine providence confirms this truth, and constantly inculcates on mankind their mortality; but the Messiah brings life and immortality to light, freely offering by his word, and applying by his Spirit, that immortality which he hath purchased*.

9, 10. O ye that are the messengers of the Messiah, commissioned to preach the gospel to the church, Declare your message publicly, proclaim it boldly, despise opposition, say to the Jews in Jerusalem, and in the cities of Judah, "Believe on the Messiah, who is your God." Believe on him, whom JEHOVAH, God the Father, hath appointed "to be head over all things to the church," while his almighty power shall support him in his government; believe on him who shall finally judge the world, when he shall reward those that

6. The voice said, Cry; and he (I) said, What shall I cry? All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field.

7. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the spirit (wind) of the Lord bloweth upon it; surely the people is grass.

8. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.

9. O Zion †, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength, lift up, be not afraid, say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

10. Behold the Lord will come with strong hand, and his arm shall be revealed for him; behold

* 1 Pet. i. 23,—25. The apostle having quoted the prophet's expressions, in this passage, says, "And this is the word, which,

by the gospel, is preached unto you."

† It might be rendered, O thou that bringest good tidings to Zion.

receive him, with eternal life; and punish those that reject him, with everlasting destruction.

11. Believe on him, whose care for his people may be fitly compared to that of a good shepherd* for his flock. For as the good shepherd feeds his flock, gathers the lambs that stray or would be left behind, with his arm, carries those that are feeble in his bosom, and leads gently the ewes great with young: so he bestows on his people spiritual food to preserve them alive for ever†; he gathers them out of the world by effectual calling, receives those that are humble and timid into the bosom of his love, and deals gently, in a suitableness to their condition, with those that labour under any distress.

12. Are ye, O Jews, prejudiced against the Messiah, on account of the meanness of his outward appearance, that he is not arrayed and attended like the kings of the world? Look round to the works of creation, what evidences are they of the power and greatness of the Being that formed them? Ask by whom they were created? Who placed, proportioned, and still regulates the waters, above and below the firmament, as easily as a man disposes of that which he holds in the hollow of his hand? Who formed the spacious firmament of heaven, as easily as a man measures the extent of a span? Who created this earth? proportioned the quantity of dry land to the waters, as readily as a man measures what is thrown into a tierce? Who formed the mountains and the hills? placed them as barriers against the waters, with as much ease and exactness, as a man weighs by the balance he holds in his hand, and prevents either scale from preponderating? I answer, all these are the works of the Messiah †.

13. Are you prejudiced against the Messiah, on account of his ignominious death, and the doc-

his reward is with him, and his work before him.

11. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

12. Who hath treasured up the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?

13. Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or, being his

* John x. 11. "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

† "I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: the bread that I will give, is my flesh, which I will give

for the life of the world," John vi. 51.

‡ "All things were made by him," John i. 3. "By him were all things made that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 16, 17. "Upholding all things by the word of his power," Heb. i. 3.

counsellor, hath taught him?

14. With whom took he counsel? and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment; and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?

15. Behold the nations are as the drop of the bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold he taketh up the isles as a very little thing.

16. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof for a burnt-offering.

17. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity.

trine of salvation through his death? Is it meet that ye, O presumptuous men, should direct the unerring Spirit of JEHOVAH?

14. Were you of his counsel, when he contrived the plan of salvation? Was it necessary for him to consult with any created being? Could he receive instruction, or additional knowledge, from you, or any man whose faculties are limited? Know that "the folly of God is more than the wisdom of man;" and that "the cross of the Messiah, though it may be to you a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness, is indeed the power and wisdom of God, for the salvation of them that believe."

15. Does the fear of man prejudice you against the Messiah? Are you afraid of submitting to him, lest you incur man's indignation*? Consider how insignificant are all men, in comparison with him whom you reject: As the drop that hangs at the bucket, when compared with the ocean; or as the dust that alters not the nicest balance, when compared with the globe of this earth. Nations the most remote, as well as the nearest, are in his presence but as an atom.

16. Are you prejudiced against the Messiah for abrogating the ceremonial law? Consider, that it was impossible for the sacrifices offered by the law, to atone for sin. Though all the cedars in Lebanon were made one fire, and all the cattle that pasture on Lebanon, were made a burnt-offering; such a sacrifice could not atone for the guilt of one soul; because such a sacrifice cannot maintain the honour of God the lawgiver, nor the authority of his law, which are violated by sin.

17. Go, ye heralds of the Messiah, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to the heathen. Be not afraid of any opposition you may meet with, remembering, that all nations, in comparison with him whom you preach, are utterly insignificant; their duration is transient, their efforts are feeble, while he is eternal and almighty.

* "Have any of the rulers believed on him?" "They did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue," John xii. 42. "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans will come, and take away our place and nation."

18. Represent to those nations, hitherto addicted to idolatry, the extreme irrationality of idol worship. How unreasonable is it, to compare God, who is the Creator of all, to any of his works, which are so far beneath him? or to represent him, who is a spiritual Being, by any thing corporeal? How can a corporeal image, of any particular form, represent the eternity, immensity, immutability, infinite wisdom, and almighty power of the Deity? Does not the very representation of him, by a corporeal image, tend to vilify and debase the Deity, in the sentiments of the worshippers?

19. How absurd is it to suppose, that God, the Creator of all, is the workmanship of his own creature, man? And yet the process of forming an image, has a tendency to impress that sentiment. In making a molten image, a workman throws a rude mass of metal into a mould, and so gives it a form, another workman gilds or plates it with gold, and casts a silver chain to ornament it.

20. When a man is so poor that he cannot afford so costly an image, he chooses a piece of wood, valuable only for its hardness in resisting the moth; he then applies to a skilful carpenter, to give it a form, to erect it, and fasten it in the place he has appointed for it. All this process implies, that the Deity is obliged for his existence, beauty and stability, to the workman's skill and labour. Can any thing be more absurd?

21. Ye are inexcusable, O ye worshippers of idols, in regard God hath given sufficient light * to discern his perfections, and the absurdity of idolatry. You must know his existence and perfections, from the testimony of your own consciences, intimating that you are his workmanship, which implies wisdom and power in him who formed you; in accusing you for secret sins, and so representing omniscience, power and ju-

18. To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

19. The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains.

20. He that is so impoverished, that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot: he seeketh unto him a cunning workman, to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved.

21. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth?

* "In him we live, move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring." Forasmuch then as we are the offspring

of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like to gold or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device," Acts xvii. 28, 29.

stice; as perfections of him the Supreme Lawgiver *. You might have heard of his perfections, from the testimony of those who were commissioned to proclaim his revealed will †. Hath not that knowledge of the Deity been communicated to the first man; and handed down by tradition, which is sufficient to discover the absurdity of worshipping images ‡. Could you not, by contemplating the works of creation, understand so much of the nature of God, as to discover the unreasonableness of idolatry §.

22. It is he that sitteth on the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers, that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in.

22. If ye will not be convinced that idolatry is an affront to your own understanding, remember it is an affront to him who is the sovereign Ruler. How improper is it in you to offend him? For it is he that regulates the motions of this earth, as easily as a man turns the wheel of his own formation; yea, regulates the events that take place in it, so that the efforts of men to resist his will, are as trivial as the frisking of grasshoppers. It is he that first extended, and still upholds the firmament of heaven, as easily as a man stretches a curtain; and formed the highest heaven for his own residence, as readily as a man spreads a tent to dwell in.

23. That bringeth the princes to nothing: he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity.

23. As your numbers cannot support idolatry, in opposition to him who is the sovereign Ruler, so neither can the influence of the powers of the world, supreme and subordinate: for he at his pleasure reduceth the power of princes to nothing, and maketh void the authority of judges.

24. Yea; they shall not be planted; yea;

24. Yea, empires, as well as individuals, are at his disposal. If men attempt to establish an em-

* "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them," Rom. i. 19. "For when the Gentiles which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these shew the works of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another," Rom. ii. 14, 15.

† The prophet looks to gospel times, and in these times the heathen may be addressed as the gospel does. The times of this igno-

rance God winked at; but "now he commandeth all men every where to repent," Acts xvii. "Have they not heard? Yea, verily, their sound went forth unto all the earth, and their words unto the end of the world," Rom. x. 18.

‡ God never left himself without a witness.

§ "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse," Rom. i. 20.

pire by the sword, and he disapprove, they shall not be planted; if they expect to arise from imperceptible beginnings, as seed sown into the ground, and he is against it, they shall not be sown. If they have already grown to a considerable degree of greatness, and promise themselves a long continuance, like a tree firmly planted, and beginning to spread its branches; he says the word, and their stock shall not take root in the earth. Are they already full grown in power? He issues his orders, and they decay; if he but blow upon them, they instantly wither. Are they apparently so established, as to defy the efforts of men, and the ravages of time? An unlooked-for event, in his providence, overturns them, and the whirl-wind shall take them away like stubble.

25. To which of my works, saith the Holy One, will ye compare me? Who among the sons of the mighty, will ye make equal with me? If none of these can be compared with me, how exceedingly unreasonable is it, to liken me to inanimate matter, and suppose me the workmanship of frail man?

26. In order to be further convinced of the power and perfections of the Deity, and the unreasonableness of idolatry, contemplate the heavenly bodies, their magnitude, their number, and the regularity of their motions: all these were created by him; their motions are directed by him. As an army in array, is directed by the command of the general, they are obedient to him; as a servant to his master, when he is called by name. Such are his sovereign authority and almighty power, that none of them faileth to appear, at the time, and in the station, appointed for them.

When the bulk of the heathen nations are induced by these arguments to submit to the Messiah *, God shall address the Jewish nation as follows:

* "For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, of this mystery; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness

they shall not be sown; yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth; and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirl-wind shall take them away as stubble.

25. To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One.

26. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one faileth.

of the Gentiles be come in, and then all Israel shall be saved," Rom: xi.

27. Why sayest thou, Jacob, and speakest, Israel, My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

27. O ye seed of Jacob, my chosen, ye descendants of Israel, with whom I entered into covenant, Wherefore do ye give place to desponding thoughts, by saying, JEHOVAH takes no particular care of our nation; we have outfinned mercy, and the judgment inflicted shall never be removed, by him who was once our God?

28. Hast thou not known, hast thou not heard, that the ever-living God the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

28. Have ye not known from his former dealings with your nation; have ye not heard from the testimony of your fathers, that JEHOVAH is the unchangeable God; and therefore unalterable with respect to his promises to your nation? That he is the Creator of the earth, and all that it contains; consequently almighty to accomplish his promises, in defiance of every opposition? he is not like man, who, attempting a work beyond his strength, grows weary of continuing it, and fails of accomplishing it: That he is infinitely wise, so that, though the conduct of his providence may appear irreconcilable to his promises respecting your nation, still that conduct is the scheme of his own understanding, which may not be searched by the narrow views of man?

29. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might, he increaseth strength.

29. He is that compassionate God, who gives relief to them that are in need; and it is his manner to communicate relief when human efforts fail.

30. Even the youths shall faint and be weary; and the young men shall utterly fail.

30. Such as rely on human efforts for deliverance, shall not obtain it, even when outward circumstances promise success. They may be fitly compared to choice young men, possessed of agility and vigour for the race; but who, in contending, stumble, grow weary, and fall short of the prize.

31. But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.

31. But they that trust in JEHOVAH, waiting patiently for his appointed time of deliverance, shall certainly obtain it. They may be fitly compared to racers, who renew their strength as they advance in the course, who are carried far beyond their own strength, borne as on eagles wings, to the wished-for goal; notwithstanding the difficulties that may occur, they shall run without weariness, and persevere to the end without fainting.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter carries on the series of events from the close of the preceding. The Jews being now converted, God is represented as sitting in judgment, summoning the nations who opposed their resettlement in Judea, to appear before him, and shew the reasons of their conduct; intimating at the same time, the vanity of their opposition, by reminding them of what he had enabled Abraham, the progenitor of the Jews, to perform, ver. 1,---4. The nations, instead of yielding, increase their resistance, ver. 5,---7. God therefore encourages the Jews, by promising his assistance, and assuring them of a complete victory over their enemies, ver. 8,---20. The prophet introduces God pointing out the improvement which ought to be made of these singular dispensations of his providence, namely, the conversion of his people, and the slaughter of their enemies, ver. 21,---29.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. I (saith JEHOVAH) command silence, as in a court of justice; and summon you, the most distant nations, to appear before me, sitting in judgment: Furnish yourselves with the most forcible arguments you can devise; you have liberty to declare plainly, whatever you can offer in arrest of that judgment which I am about to pronounce, and to execute, on account of your opposition to my people*.

2. To convince you how vain is your opposition to their settlement in Judea, reflect on what I did for their progenitor Abraham. Who called that righteous man from his native land in the east, to settle in Canaan? Who directed him to make war in that land where he was a sojourner? Who enabled him, by the servants of his household, to overcome allied nations, and gave the law to confederate kings†? He conquered them as easily, by means seemingly inadequate to the end, as dust and stubble are driven of the wind.

THE TEXT.

1. Keep silence before me, O islands, and let the people renew their strength: let them come near, then let them speak; let us come near together to judgment.

2. Who raised up the righteous man from the east, called him to his foot, gave the nations before him, and made him rule over kings? he gave them as the dust to his sword, and as driven stubble to his bow.

* This same event is represented as a solemn judgment, Dan. vii. 9, 10, 11, and Joel iii.

† Gen. xiv. 14. &c.

3. He pursued them, and passed safely, by the way that he had gone with his feet.

4. Who hath brought and done it, calling the generations from the beginning? O Lord, the first; and with the last, I am

5. The isles saw it, and feared; the ends of the earth were afraid, drew near and came.

6. They helped everyone his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.

7. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheneth with the hammer, him that hote the anvil; saying, It is ready for the ordering; and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved.

8. But thou Israel art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend.

9. Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and

3. He pursued them, and conquered them, notwithstanding he had been unaccustomed to make war.

4. Who hath designed and executed the various events that have taken place in the world, calling into existence the several generations of men, and accomplishing by them as instruments, the events originally designed? It is I, JEHOVAH, the first cause, and last end of all things.

5. The nations along the coasts of the Mediterranean* saw the conversion of the Jews, and they feared the consequences. The people that bordered on the land of Judea† were terrified; accordingly they formed alliances, and drew together their forces, to resist the resettlement of the Jews.

6. These nations assisted one another in providing arms; and encouraged each other to carry on the war.

7. Workmen in their several departments, as carpenters, gilders, smiths, vied with one another in making arms ‡, and when they had made them, they gloried in the success of their undertaking, alleging that they were soon ready, and well made.

8. But as for you, O Jews, ye are my servants, the descendents of Jacob, whom I preferred to his brother Esau: the seed of Abraham, my friend, with whom I entered into covenant.

9. I formerly brought you to the promised land, from distant countries, as Egypt and Babylon; I have preferred you to other nations more illustrious: I have entered into covenant with

* So the isles are often used.

† The original word **אֶרֶץ** may be translated earth or land.

‡ Bishop Lowth supposes, that the workmen vied with one another to form images, not arms. But my reasons for supposing that arms are intended, are these:

1. There is no word in the original, either for arms or images.

2. It appears from v. 12. that the nations

mentioned, made war on the Jews; "they that war against thee, shall be as nothing."

3. It is more suitable to the scope of the prophet's discourse, to suppose, that they were busied in forging arms rather than images.

4. In a parallel passage, arms are expressly mentioned, Joel iii. 9, 10. "Beat your plow-shares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears."

you, that you should be my servants, and I should be your God. Having therefore made choice of you, I will not now reject you.

10. Fear not your numerous enemies, and their formidable preparations, for I will take your part. Be not disheartened, I am your God in covenant: I will furnish you with courage and strength; I will render your efforts successful; I will support you by my great power, exercised according to justice.

11. See the consequences: all those enemies who with rage opposed you, shall be ashamed of their devices; their efforts shall be fruitless; they shall themselves be insignificant; and their contention shall end in their destruction,

12. So complete shall be their destruction, that no remains of those who contend with you shall be left. They who now prepare war against you, shall be as insignificant in their end, as they are formidable in their beginning*.

13. For I, JEHOVAH, your God in covenant, will support your own efforts: I say, Fear not the issue; my assistance shall render your arms successful.

14. Though in your own esteem ye are vile as worms, and in the opinion of others insignificant mortals; yet as I delivered your father Jacob in great distress, and gave him the name of Israel in testimony of that deliverance; which name is transmitted to you; so will I assist you, saith JEHOVAH, and prove your deliverer from the present danger; acting according to that title, the Holy One of Israel.

15. Behold I will make you the instruments †

* The same event is represented Joel iii. 13. and Rev. xiv. 14. 16. by reaping with the harvest sickle: and indeed no metaphor can be more striking. The place where a luxuriant crop waved to the wind, after the sickle has gone over it, appears naked and bare, no stalk remains to testify its former pride and fulness. Such is the destruction whereby God will cut off the enemies of the truth in their season.

† That the converted Jews are the instruments of Divine vengeance on the enemies of religion, appears from Jer. li. 19. 24. "Thou art my battle-axe, and weapons of war; for with thee will I break in pieces the nations, and with thee will I destroy kingdoms," &c. See also Rev. xix. 11. 21. with ver. 7. and Rev. xvi. 12.

said unto thee, Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee, and now I will cast thee away.

10. Fear thou not for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

11. Behold all they that were incensed against thee, shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish.

12. Thou shalt see them, and shalt not find them; even they that contended with thee; they that warred against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought.

13. For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not, I will keep thee.

14. Fear not, thou worm Jacob, and ye men of Israel: I will help thee, saith the Lord, and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.

15. Behold I will

make thee a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small; and shalt make the hills as chaff.

16. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them; and thou shalt rejoice in the Lord, and thou shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17. When the poor and needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them.

18. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry-land springs of water.

19. I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil-tree; I will set in the desert the fir-tree, and the pine, and the box-tree together.

20. That they may see and know, and con-

in my hand, to subdue the enemies of the true religion; ye shall subdue them as effectually, as a new corn-drag, or wain armed with pointed teeth* threshes out the corn: ye shall reduce all the powers, supreme and subordinate, that support every false religion, and cause them to disappear, as the chaff† is driven away by the wind.

16. Ye shall separate the worshippers of the true God, from the votaries of every false religion, whom ye shall utterly subdue, as a corn-fan separates the grain from chaff, and exposes the chaff to be driven away by the wind, and scattered by the whirlwind; while ye shall rejoice spiritually and temporally in JEHOVAH, as your God, and glory in the national establishment, formed by the Holy One of Israel.

17. These things shall be accomplished to your nation, when you are made poor in spirit, when ye are made sensible of your need of the Saviour whom ye rejected; when you are brought to that distress from which there appears no issue; as travellers in the sandy desert seeking water and finding none, so that their tongue faileth for thirst. In that distress, when your nation has recourse to me by prayer, I JEHOVAH will answer them, I the God who is in covenant with Israel will not forsake them.

18. I will abundantly supply your wants spiritual and temporal, ye shall be satisfied as much as the travellers in the desert, if a river should open in the high places, or fountains spring up in the valleys, if the glowing sand were changed into a standing pool, and the dry ground abounded with streams of water.

19. I will not only supply your wants, but I will also gratify your desires; you shall delight yourselves in the ordinances of my grace, and in the protection of my Providence; more than your fathers were delighted under the shade of the palm trees at Elim‡.

20. That the Jewish nation may see in their conversion and deliverance, the power of JEHO-

* See note on chap. xxviii. 27.

† Exod. xv. 27.

‡ See Dan. ii. 35.

VAH; that they may acknowledge his goodness and fidelity, as their God in covenant; that they may seriously weigh these dispensations of his Providence, and profit by them.

21. When these things are accomplished, God shall address idols and their worshippers thus: Draw near, ye that lay claim to divinity; produce the grounds on which ye contend with me, saith JEHOVAH; shew your mighty powers, by which you may justify your claim, saith the king of Jacob.

22. If they build their claim on the accomplishment of prophecy, let them approach and declare the events that shall take place. Let them either declare to us things formerly predicted, which have already taken place; what are they? that we may consider them, and know the coincidence of the predictions with the events; or let them utter prophecies now, that shall be accomplished afterwards.

23. Tell us the things that will come to pass in future times, so that when these are accomplished, we shall know that ye are gods; or if ye will not suspend your claim so long, do immediately good to your votaries, or evil to your enemies; then shall we be struck at once with admiration and terror.

24. But in regard, you can do none of those things, I declare you to be insignificant, your works nothing, and your worshippers abominable.

25. But my claim to be the only true God, is conspicuously manifested, in the recent dispensations of my grace and Providence, to my ancient people. I have gathered them from the countries in which they were dispersed, and particularly from the north and east; and they shall possess the promised land. I have taught them to call upon my name, in an acceptable manner; to which they were a long time strangers. I have enabled them to subdue the kings of the earth, who combined their forces in support of idolatry, as easily, and as effectually, as the builder beats mortar to mix it, or the potter treads clay.

sider, and understand together, that the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.

21. Produce your cause, saith the Lord; bring forth your strong reasons, saith the king of Jacob.

22. Let them bring forth, and shew us what shall happen; let them shew the former things what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare us things for to come.

23. Shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are gods; yea, do good, or do evil, that we may be dismayed, and behold it together.

24. Behold ye are of nothing, and your work of nought; an abomination is he that chuseth you.

25. I have raised up one from the north, and he shall come; from the rising of the sun shall he call upon my name; and he shall come upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay.

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26. Who hath declared from the beginning, that we may know, and before time that we may say he is righteous? Yea there is none that sheweth; yea there is none that declareth; yea there is none that heareth your words.

27. The first shall say to Zion, Behold, behold; and I will give to Jerusalem one that bringeth good tidings.

28. For I beheld, and there was no man; even among them, and there was no counselor, that when I asked of them could answer a word.

29. Behold they are all vanity; their works are nothing; their molten images are wind and confusion.

26. Which of the idols hath from the beginning foretold this remarkable event? Hath any of them declared it before hand, that now when it is accomplished, we might say the prediction is true? There was not one that foretold it, there was not one that declared it, no one witness can be adduced, who can say in truth, that he heard your words.

27. But I at an early period gave the knowledge of this event, to the church, by the word of prophecy: see now the accomplishment. The people of whom I prophesied are here, in those circumstances which the glad tidings, communicated to the church, predicted.

28. But after the most minute inspection, it will be found, that there was none of the idols, nor was one among their worshippers, who gave warning of this event: upon a diligent enquiry it will be known, that none of them does even pretend to it.

29. See the conclusion. Idols have no existence as gods. They can neither do good nor evil. Their votaries rely on the wind, and their hopes shall end in emptiness; for the idols cannot profit them in time or through eternity.

Second PARALLEL VIEW.

WE have a second parallel view of the gospel times, from the appearance of the Messiah, until the millennium, contained in chapters xlii, xliii, xlv, xlvi, xlvii, and xlviii. except the three last verses of the xlv. chapter, and the first thirteen verses of the xlv. chapter, which relate to the return from Babylon only; a subject introduced here as an argument, connected with the general scope of the main prophecy.

C H A P T E R XLII.

THE ARGUMENT.

WITH those who regard the authority of the New Testament, no doubt can remain, that this chapter refers to the Messiah, and the gospel times; by comparing ver. 1, 2, 3. with Mat. xii. 18.

and ver. 7. with Luke ii. 32. Acts xiii. 47. The spirit of prophecy lays before us, the character of Christ as Mediator, ver. 1.---4.; his commission from the Father, ver. 5,---9.; the success of his commission, or the effect of the gospel on the Gentiles, ver. 10,---16.; a reproof of the Gentiles that still obstinately adhered to idolatry, ver. 17.; an address to the Jews, shewing their rejection of the gospel, their inexcusableness, and the justice of the punishments inflicted on them, on account of their obstinacy, ver. 18,---25.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Behold (saith JEHOVAH) the Messiah, who thinks it "no robbery to be equal with God." Yet he shall appear as my servant, "being found in fashion as a man," in order to act the part of Mediator betwixt God and man. I will support him in performing the duties of that office. I have appointed him to it, and I am well pleased with the manner in which I foresee he shall discharge it. I will bestow my Spirit on him, and on all his followers through him, so that he shall publish and establish the true religion, among all nations.

2. He shall be eminent for meekness, bearing the contradiction of sinners with patience, not with brawling. He shall be distinguished for humility, not seeking praise of men, nor making an ostentatious parade of his power*.

3. He shall be remarkable for condescension to the weak, bearing with infirmities of every kind, when there is a spark of integrity in the heart; instructing the prejudiced mind, as it can bear; soothing the wounded conscience, as its case requires; shewing unalterable love and unwearied affection in his dealings with his faithful followers, until he make the infirm stand "perfect and complete in all the will of God."

4. He shall resist his enemies with undaunted courage and unimpaired strength, until he shall establish the true religion in the earth, and the nations most detached and remote shall submit to his government.

5. Thus saith the God, even JEHOVAH, the Creator of heaven and earth, the Producer of all

THE TEXT.

1. Behold my servant whom I uphold mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my Spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.

2. He shall not cry nor lift up his voice nor cause it to be heard in the street.

3. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth.

4. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his law.

5. Thus saith the Lord God, he that created the heavens.

* Mat. xii. 18.

and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk there-
in:

6. I, the Lord, have called thee in righteousness, and will hold mine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles;

7. To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.

8. I am the Lord, that is my name; and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

9. Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them.

10. Sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth; ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles and the inhabitants thereof.

things in them, the Former of the spirits of all men:

6, 7. I, JEHOVAH, have appointed thee, O Messiah, to the office of Mediator, for the manifestation of my righteousness, by punishing sin, and yet pardoning sinners*. I will support thee in the duties, and preserve thee in the difficulties, connected with it. I have appointed thee to confirm my covenant, with my people Israel, and to reclaim to my service the other nations. To deliver men from the miseries entailed on them by sin, to dispel their ignorance, and remove their prejudices, to subdue their irregular passions, and set them free from the slavery of Satan, in which they had been long detained.

8. This my commission shall be effectual for attaining the ends I design: For I am JEHOVAH, the self-existent; my power is according to my name; there is nothing too difficult for me to perform. Again, my glory is interested in attaining these ends, for I will not give my glory to the false claimants to divinity, nor permit graven images to share the praise, that is due to me only.

9. Above all, my faithfulness in accomplishing prophecy, requires the rendering of this commission effectual. I have uttered predictions concerning other events; lo, these are accomplished! I now declare new events, before they are fulfilled, I publish them, that when they are fulfilled, all men may be convinced of my faithfulness.

10. See the future consequences of this commission, given to the Messiah; a mandate shall be issued with effect, to the Gentiles of every denomination, to praise God. Sing unto JEHOVAH, O ye converted † Gentiles, a new song, on account of the glad tidings of salvation sent you; utter his praise, ye that dwell in the remotest corners of the earth; ye mariners that have no fixed ha-

* Rom. iii. 5.

† That their singing signifies their con-

version, appears from Romans xv. 9, 12, 11.

bitation, but wander on the sea; and ye that are inhabitants of the distant sea-coasts and islands.

11. Nations, rude and ignorant as the uncultivated desert, shall joyfully receive the knowledge of the Messiah, and be formed by his instructions. Persons, cruel as the inhabitants of Kedar, shall be made gentle by his laws. They who dwell in the rocks, and live by plunder, shall joyfully submit to his government; and those who live in poverty on the tops of the mountains, shall exult in his unsearchable riches.

12. All shall join in ascribing glory to JEHOVAH, for the knowledge of the Redeemer; and in communicating that knowledge to distant nations, for the advancing his praise.

13. For as a hero marcheth forth to battle, or a mighty warrior rouseth his vengeance, so JEHOVAH shall manifest his power, in destroying the kingdom of Satan, and delivering mankind from his influence. He shall make offer of pardon and salvation, in the most public manner, to all without exception, and enforce that offer, by the most awful threatenings against those who refuse it. He shall exert, likewise, the power of his grace, to subdue the enmity of the carnal mind.

14. Though I delayed (saith JEHOVAH) the offer of the Saviour for a long time, shall I withhold it forever? Shall I continually refrain from the manifestation of my mercy? Surely not: For as a woman with child fulfils her time, to perfect the birth, but when her season comes, she can refrain her pangs no longer; just so, to perfect the scheme of redemption, I delayed the manifestation of the Saviour, but when the period, judged by me the fittest, arrives, his appearance, and the offers of salvation through him, shall not be withheld any longer*.

* "In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son," Gal. iv. 4. Among other reasons for the delay of the gospel dispensation, one is, That to this delay we owe the evidence arising from prophecy. Had Christ appeared at the beginning of the world, when he was first promised, there would be no occasion for prophecy concerning him, nor room for the completion of it. Had he appeared

when God called Abraham, the evidence from prophecy had been incomplete; for the temporal promises made to the seed of Abraham, and their completion in the conduct of Providence, afford a demonstration, to our external senses, of the truth of the divine word, and this evidence reflects its light on the prophecies concerning the Saviour.

11. Let the wilderness, and the cities thereof, lift up their voice; the villages that Kedar doth inhabit; let the inhabitants of the rock sing; let them shout from the top of the mountains.

12. Let them give glory unto the Lord, and declare his praise in the islands.

13. The Lord shall go forth as a mighty man, he shall stir up jealousy like a man of war; he shall cry, ye shall roar; he shall prevail against his enemies.

14. I have long time holden my peace; I have been still and refrained myself; now will I cry like a travelling woman; I will destroy and devour at once.

15. I will make waste mountains and hills, and dry up all their rivers; and I will make the rivers islands, and will dry up the pools.

15. I will, by the propagation of the gospel, destroy the bulwarks of the kingdom of Satan, the power of mighty empires, and the influence of their rulers, together with the prejudices and passions of the vulgar multitude; I will disappoint the artifices of priest-craft, and consume the authority of long established superstition.

16. And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known; I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them.

16. I will instruct the ignorant, leading them to the knowledge and to the practice of the truth, with which they were formerly unacquainted; I will remove their scruples and prejudices; I will subdue their rugged passions, so as to make them submissive and obedient. These things will I do for them here, as an earnest of eternal glory, which I will bestow hereafter.

17. They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.

17. But they who obstinately adhere to idolatry, notwithstanding the light afforded, and the offers made by the gospel, shall be disappointed in their expectations, and counteracted in their efforts to acquire happiness here, and overwhelmed with everlasting confusion hereafter.

18. Hear, ye deaf, and look, ye blind, that ye may see.

18. And now that the Gentiles every where submit to the Messiah, hear, O ye Jews, who have been hitherto deaf to his call; look attentively to the evidences of his divine mission, to which ye have been hitherto blind.

19. Who is blind, but my servant, or deaf, as my messenger that I sent? Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the Lord's servant?

19. How inexcusable is your unbelief! What nation is so blind, as the people I took to be my servants? or so deaf, as they whom I sent as messengers of the truth to others? for "to them were committed the oracles of God." What people is so blind, as they who have been fully instructed, by the several means of grace, and many singular dispensations of my providence? or deaf, as they who solemnly professed and pledged themselves to be the servants of JEHOVAH?

20. Seeing many things, but thou observest not; opening the ears, but he heareth not.

20. Ye have seen indeed the mercies performed by the Messiah, but ye do not regard him as such. Your ears have heard him speak "as never man spoke," but ye will not believe him.

21. The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness sake; he will magnify the law, and make it honourable.

21. Shall your unbelief make the promise of God to him, and to mankind through him, of none effect? Surely not; for in him JEHOVAH is well pleased. In every thing concerning him,

even your unbelief, his truth is fulfilled. In his obedience and suffering, God's righteousness shall be manifested, and his law shall be magnified and made honourable.

22. On the contrary, your unbelief shall bring many calamities on yourselves. It shall be seen and said of you, This is a people spoiled of their land, plundered of their effects, ensnared by delusion, and deprived of their liberty. They have long continued in this calamitous situation, without an advocate to plead for them, or a redeemer to rescue them.

23. Will none of you lay these things seriously to heart, so as to hear and understand the voice of God, in the afflictions with which you are visited, that ye may, for the time to come, be delivered from them? Commune with your own hearts, question within yourselves.

24. Who has deprived the Jewish nation of their privileges, and made the seed of Israel a prey to the other nations? Was it not JEHOVAH? Could these calamities come upon us without his knowledge or against his will? Does he not act justly? Consequently these calamities are come upon us, on account of national sins; because the nation walked not according to the rule of his will, and submitted not to the light of his truth.

25. Therefore he hath visited them with afflictions, bearing the marks of his great anger, and the appearance of a war carried on with violence against them. Though their afflictions may be fitly compared to a fire kindled round about them, the nation did not regard them, so as to be humbled by them; though they experienced anguish, like the pain of burning, they did not seriously consider the end God had in view.

22. For this is a people robbed and spoiled, they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison-houses; they are for a prey, and none delivereth; for a spoil, and none saith, Restore.

23. Who among you will give ear to this? Who will hearken and hear for the time to come?

24. Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law.

25. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.

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CHAPTER XLIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet having shewed the rejection of the Jews, in the close of the preceding chapter, and the justice of that dispensation, he points out in this several grounds of comfort: That in the trials immediately preceding their conversion, they shall be preserved from utter destruction, ver. 1,---4.; that they shall be gathered, in due time, from all the corners of the earth, into which they were dispersed, ver. 5,---7.; that they shall be converted, ver. 8.

On this event God addresses the idolaters in the language of triumph, challenging them to produce any such instances of foreknowledge in their false gods, ver. 9. He next addresses the Jews on the same event, urging the propriety of faith in him, ver. 10,---13. To confirm their faith in him, and love to him, he mentions circumstances coinciding with their conversion; as, the fall of spiritual Babylon, ver. 14,---17.; their own preservation and instruction, during the period that elapses betwixt their conversion, and their resettlement in Judea, ver. 18,---21. He shews, that all these great favours proceed from free grace, not their merit; in regard they were ungrateful to him at all times, ver. 22,---28.

THE TEXT.

1. But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

2. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Yet now, after a long period of irreclaimable obstinacy under affliction, thus saith JEHOVAH, who created you, O Israel, in a peculiar manner, being the seed of the promise, and formed you into a national church, Fear not that you shall be utterly destroyed, for I have resolved again to redeem you, to call you to the knowledge of myself, ye shall be my people.

2. In the last and greatest distress* of your nation, my presence shall be with you, and shall deliver you, though, to human appearance, your destruction seem inevitable, like that of a person passing through the water, when the river is ready to overwhelm him; or walking in the fire, when the flame kindles upon him.

* The distress which the prophet has in view, is that which immediately precedes the conversion of the Jews, mentioned Isa. li. 19. Jer. xxx. 4. 9. Ezek. xx. 33. Dan. xii. 1.

3. For I am JEHOVAH, your God in covenant, the Holy One of Israel, your Redeemer; in former ages I preferred you to nations, greater and more famous than you, and punished them to procure deliverance for you, as Egypt, Ethiopia, and Seba.

4. When ye were precious in my sight, not on account of your merit, but of my free choice, ye were honoured by men, and loved by me; for the same reason, my free choice, I will again punish men for your sakes, and nations * for your deliverance.

5. Fear ye not, for my presence is with you; I will bring the people of your nation from the east, and gather you together from the west.

6. I will say to the north country, Give up the Jews that are among you; and to the south country, Prevent them not from returning to their own land. I will excite the inhabitants of those regions, however separated from each other, and remote, to convey, at their own expence, to Judea, the men and women of your nation†, being acknowledged as my sons and daughters in covenant.

7. For that people who are called by my name, in testimony of my resolution to bless them‡; whom I formed into a separate people, for the purpose of manifesting my mercy and faithfulness; whom I constituted a national church, and will again restore to that state, in order to perfect the scheme contrived by my wisdom.

8. I will command and effect their conversion||, manifesting them to the world, as that people who were spiritually blind, but now have eyes to dis-

3. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.

4. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.

5. Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;

6. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back; bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.

7. Even every one that is called by my name; for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea, I have made him.

8. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.

* He points to the battle of Armageddon, in which the kings of the earth and their armies are destroyed. See Rev. xix. 11.

† See chap. xlix. 22. chap. lx. 8, 9. chap. lvi. 20.

‡ See Num. vi. 27. Exod. xx. 4.

|| That the conversion of the Jewish nation is intended in this passage, I infer, not only from the connection, but likewise from the expressions being diametrically opposite to those used by the prophet, chap. vi. intimating their infidelity. There, "they

had eyes and saw not, ears and heard not." Here, though blind formerly, they *now* see, though deaf, they *now* hear. Besides, the expressions are conformable to those of the apostle on the same subject, 2 Cor. iii. 14, 15, 16. "But their minds were blind; for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away, in the reading of the Old Testament. Even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their hearts; nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

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cern the Redeemer's glory; who were spiritually deaf, but now have ears to hear and receive the truths concerning the Messiah.

9. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and shew us former things? Let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified, or let them hear, and say it is truth.

9. Let all the nations that are idolaters be gathered together, let the people that worship idols be collected. Do you, the converted Jews, question them in my name. Who among them will declare, that their gods uttered such a prophecy as this concerning your conversion? or can now tell what remarkable event shall hereafter first be accomplished. Let them produce witnesses to prove their assertions, that the claim of these idols to divinity may be justified; or, if they fail in the proof, let them hear in their turn, and acknowledge, that the prophecy uttered by me, concerning your conversion, is truth.

10. Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he; before me there was no god formed, neither shall there be after me.

10. Ye are my witnesses, O ye converted Jews, to prove the justice of my claim to divinity, as well as my servant whom I have chosen, the Messiah, to whom ye have now submitted. It becomes you to know me, and believe my word, and understand that I am the only true God, and that there is no other; before me no god was formed, and after me none shall exist.

11. I, even I, am the Lord; and besides me there is no saviour.

11. I, even I, am JEHOVAH the self-existent, and besides me there is no saviour, to deliver men from the calamities incident to human life, or the miseries entailed on mankind through sin.

12. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed where there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God.

12. I have, in former ages, on several occasions, declared my purpose of delivering your nation; and I have given deliverances, according to these declarations. I made known my power and faithfulness, when there was no strange god among you, to whom these deliverances could be ascribed. Thus ye are my witnesses, saith JEHOVAH, that I am God.

13. Yea, before the day was, I am he; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand. I will work, and who shall let it?

13. But before time was, to which your testimony cannot reach, I am the only true God, and in all time to come, I am the Almighty; there is none that can rescue my enemies out of my hand: I will work their destruction, and who can disannul what I have purposed to perform?

14. Thus saith the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel,

14. Thus saith JEHOVAH, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, For your sake I have sent enemies against spiritual Babylon, and have broken

down her supports, both her arms and delusions, that were as strong bars to a fortified city: I have destroyed the traffic of her emissaries, who exulted in spreading her idolatries, more extensively than the Chaldeans spread their commerce.

15. This have I done, to deliver you from the prejudices occasioned by her idolatries; because I am JEHOVAH, your God, who will sanctify you; who will "create you in Christ Jesus to good works;" and will rule over you and direct you, as Head of the church.

16. Thus saith JEHOVAH, who made a way in the Red Sea, and a path in the mighty waters, for Israel's deliverance:

17. Who brought forth into the same path the rider and the horse, the army and the warriors of Pharaoh, for their destruction; so that they lay down together in the deep, and were no more; their anger against, and their efforts to subdue Israel were extinguished, and quenched like tow.

18. However memorable these events are; however worthy of regard these transactions of past ages, ye shall not remember them, nor regard them so highly, as the deliverance which I will bestow on your nation in the latter days.

19. Behold I will perform an extraordinary work, your conversion; it shall be done suddenly: Will ye not consider it as more worthy of your regard, than all my former interpositions? Ye surely will. I will make a way for your deliverance in the wilderness, to which ye shall be gathered in your last distress. I will give my grace as streams of water in that desert.

20, 21. Your disposition, which was formerly rugged and intractable, like that of the wild beasts of the field, shall be humanized so as to glorify me; though cunning as serpents, ye shall be made sincere; though delighting in darkness like owls, ye shall be brought to the light of the children of God. Because I will bestow grace as waters in the wilderness; and the influences of my Spirit, as flowing streams in the desert, to give spiritual drink to my people, my chosen, even the Jewish

For your sake I have, sent to Babylon, and have brought down all their nobles, and the Chaldeans, whose cry is in the ships.

15. I am the Lord, your Holy One, the Creator of Israel, your king.

16. Thus saith the Lord, which maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters;

17. Which bringeth forth the chariot and the horse, the army and the power, they shall lie down together; they shall not rise; they are extinct, they are quenched as tow.

18. Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old.

19. Behold I will do a new thing: now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

20. The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen.

21. This formed they shall my praise 22. But not called Jacob; t ready of

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21. This people have formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

22. But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

23. Thou hast not brought me the small cattle of thy burnt offerings, neither hast thou honoured me with thy sacrifices; I have not caused thee to serve with an offering, nor wearied thee with incense.

24. Thou hast brought me no sweet cane with money, neither hast thou filled me with the fat of thy sacrifices; but thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.

25. I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins.

26. Put me in remembrance, let us plead together; declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.

27. Thy first father hath sinned, and thy teachers have transgressed against me.

people, whom I originally formed for myself, for manifesting the praise of my power, mercy and faithfulness.

22. But these things shall be accomplished to you, not on account of your merit, but my free grace; for ye were at all times ungrateful to me: though the descendents of Jacob, ye did not imitate his faith and fervency in prayer; and though ye were my chosen people, Israel, ye were weary of serving me, and constantly turning aside to idolatry.

23. Ye have frequently withheld from me the sacrifices which the law enjoined, and at other times offered them from improper motives, not from a desire to honour me; though I did not require of you, (like the heathen gods), sacrifices costly, above your abilities, or painful to your feelings.

24. Ye reckoned it a burdensome task to purchase sweet calamus for the sanctuary, and therefore neglected it; ye grew weary continually, to bring the best of your flocks and herds to offer in sacrifice, and therefore withheld them. But, on the contrary, ye burdened me with the weight of your sins, and continued to weary me, by a repetition of your iniquities.

25. But, notwithstanding your past ingratitude, I, even I, am that God who will pardon your transgressions, for the manifestation of my free grace; and will not execute the punishment due to your sins.

26. I only require of you to put me in remembrance of the promises made to your nation; plead fervently in prayer; let us wrestle together, as Jacob wrestled with me at Bethel: confess your transgressions fully, and you shall be justified freely.

27. Does the conduct of my Providence to your nation, especially in ejecting them from the land, appear to you irreconcilable to the love I now profess? Consider that your sin resembled that of your first father, Adam, and therefore ye deserved a similar punishment. I placed him in paradise, amidst a profusion of delights; but he re-

belled against my commandment, and I ejected him. Just so, I settled your nation in Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but ye perverted the blessings bestowed, and revolted against my will, therefore I ejected you. Besides, your teachers, who ought by their office to instruct others, transgressed themselves, and taught others to transgress against me.

28. It was fit, therefore, to dissolve a community so ill regulated; I accordingly did dissolve the government; even the priests, consecrated to my service, I mingled without distinction with the multitude, and visited the whole nation with such afflictions, as carried evident marks of a curse from God, on the descendents of Jacob, and exposed to the reproaches of men, the seed of Israel.

28. Therefore I have profaned the princes of the sanctuary, and have given Jacob to the curse, and Israel to reproaches.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter carries on the account of the gospel times. There is a fuller narrative of the conversion of the Jews, ver. 1,---5. This event was mentioned in the preceding chapter, ver. 8. and 18,---21. What followed, may be considered as exhortations and observations founded on it. The subject is renewed here, as a ground of further exhortations. God addresses the Jews as the witnesses of his power and prescience, exhorting them to believe in him, ver. 6,---8.

He next addresses idolaters, representing the folly of worshipping images, by arguments the most acute and forcible, ver. 9,---20. These are applicable not only to the idolatry of Pagan nations, but likewise to the image-worship practised in the church of Rome.

He addresses the Jews again. In which address, after an exhortation to steadfastness, he suggests several considerations, to prove the certain accomplishment of this prophecy, concerning their conversion and restoration. As,

1. That he had pardoned the sins which occasioned their dispersion, ver. 22.

2. He views it as already accomplished, and represents the general joy occasioned by it, ver. 23.

3. He represents his almighty power, to which nothing is impossible, ver. 24.

4. His foreknowledge, which is superior to heathen divination, ver. 25, 26. and has been proved by many instances in the conduct of his Providence.

As a very remarkable instance, he introduces the return from Babylon, ver. 27, 28. which, though future when the prophet wrote, is prior to the restoration of the latter days, which he has chiefly in view. On this instance, he enlarges in the following chapter; but returns to describe the events of the latter days, at the fourteenth verse of the next chapter.

THE TEXT.

1. Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen.

2. Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee, Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, and thou Jeshurun whom I have chosen.

3. I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.

4. And they shall spring up as among the grafs, and as willows by the water courses.

5. One shall say, I

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. But notwithstanding the calamities ye experienced in your dispersion, hear now, ye descendants of Jacob, whom I have taken to be my servants; ye seed of Israel, whom I have chosen from among the nations, to be my people.

2. Thus saith JEHOVAH, your Maker, who formed your family, from the beginning, into a national church, Fear ye not your present distress, O ye that are the descendants of Jacob, who made supplications to me in Penuel*, and prevailed; and though you are likewise the descendants of Jeshurun†, who, in his prosperity, rebelled against me, I have chosen you to be my people.

3. For I will certainly convert you, and restore you to my favour, as I pour water on the thirsty land, to make it productive, and flowing streams on the dry ground, to make it fertile; so will I abundantly pour out my Spirit, on you, the seed of those who were unproductive of glory to me; and my blessing on you, the offspring of those who were barren as to the fruits of righteousness.

4. And they who receive my Spirit, shall make a progress in my knowledge, and in righteousness, great and extensive, as † the growth of the grafs, springing up luxuriantly, and abundantly, among the waters; rapid as the progress of the willows planted beside the aqueducts.

5. And each individual, as well as the whole

* Gen. xxxii. 24. 30.

† Deut. xxxii. 15.

‡ The words might be rendered as among the grafs, the willows, &c. and so

it may signify, that the Jewish church shall be superior to the Gentile churches, in all the graces of the Spirit, as far as the willows overtop the grafs.

nation, shall enter into a covenant with the Messiah, whom they shall acknowledge to be JEHOVAH; nor shall they do this lightly, but on the clearest conviction, and with the firmest resolution to adhere to his covenant, as persons subscribing a solemn deed of the highest importance.

6. Nor shall they have cause to repent of their resolution. For thus saith JEHOVAH, to those who have entered into covenant with him, I am the King of the seed of Israel, to protect and guide them; their Redeemer, to deliver them from all ills, temporal and spiritual: qualified to be their Redeemer, as the self-existent, and sovereign Ruler; the first cause, and the last end of all things*, and the only true God†.

7. If a scruple arise concerning my claim to divinity, let the completion of this prophecy concerning your conversion remove it. Who is like me, of all those who have falsely laid claim to divinity? Is any of them able to accomplish such an event as this? to make it known before-hand by prophecy; to dispose events for its accomplishment, in the course of Providence; to carry on these in a connected chain, from the period I appointed their conversion, until the people of that age destined for it appeared? Or are any of them able to declare unto us, the things that are now accomplishing, and shall hereafter be accomplished?

8. Fear ye not, therefore, your enemies, neither be ye afraid to trust in me; have I not declared unto you your present situation from the first? Yea I have foreshewn it by my prophets, and ye are my witnesses, that your situation is according to what I foretold. Say then, is there a god beside me? Are you not convinced there is none? Of a truth there is no other sure protector; though I am infinite in knowledge, I know not any.

9. Let the Gentile nations learn from the completion of this prophecy, the vanity of idolatry,

am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand to the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel.

6. Thus saith the Lord, the king of Israel, and his Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts, I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no god.

7. And who as I shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I appointed the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and shall come: let them shew unto them.

8. Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? Ye are even my witnesses. Is there a god beside me? Yea, there is no god: I know not any.

9. They that make a graven image are all

* "Having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, like unto the Son of God," Heb. vii. 3. "and he is before all things, and by him all things consist," Col. i. 17.

† "This is the true God, and eternal life," 1 John v. 20.

of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; they see not, nor know, that they may be ashamed.

10. Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image, that is profitable for nothing?

11. Behold all his fellows shall be ashamed; and the workmen they are of men; let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, and they shall be ashamed together.

12. The smith with the tongs, both worketh in the coals, and fashioneth it with hammers, and worketh it with the strength of his arms: yea he is hungry, and his strength faileth; he drinketh no water, and is faint.

They that form images in order to worship them, are void of reason and principle*. The images in which they delight are incapable of profiting them, either temporally, spiritually, or eternally. And their worshippers are inexcusable, because the images, being lifeless, give sufficient evidence to their worshippers, that they neither see nor understand, consequently cannot represent the Deity, who is omniscient, and infinitely wise.

10. Who are the makers of images, and so the promoters of idolatry, that cannot profit?

11. I (saith JEHOVAH) summon each of them to appear, and solemnly declare to them, and to all their companions, the worshippers of images, that they shall be ashamed of their idols. What are the workmen but men? and yet they are the makers of the gods that others worship. If so, let them defend these gods: let them be gathered together for that purpose, let them stand up for their defence, either by arguments or arms. In the end, they and the worshippers together with them, shall fear for their own safety, and be ashamed of their idols.

12. For what are those idols, but masses of metal, or logs of wood? The idol made of metal, instead of being the creator of men, is himself the workmanship of a smith. Trace the process by which he is formed into a god: The smith takes him in the tongs,---thrusts him into the fire,---belabours his body with the hammer, and with the strength of his arms. Has not this humiliating process a tendency to debase the Deity in the opinion of men? and to remove that reverence which they ought to have for his adorable perfections? At the very time the smith is engaged in making the idol, he feels tired, but receives no strength from his god to support him; he is hungry, but his god provides not a morsel of bread for him; he is thirsty and ready to faint, but his god procures not a drop of water for him. If this god is so ungrateful in neglecting, or so in-

† The word in the original is Tohu, the same used to describe the earth when yet a chaos, Gen. i. 2.

capable of assisting his maker, how can he profit his worshippers?

13. The wooden idol, instead of ordering all things, (which pertains to the nature of the Deity), is himself reduced to order, by the carpenter's tools. He is at first a shapeless log, and requires the line to mark out his length, breadth and thickness; the rule to form his members in proportion; the plane to smooth him; and the compass to round his head and shoulders. What a humiliating process! After all, he attains the figure of a man, who is "a little lower than the angels," and in comparison with God as a worm. Still it is but the lifeless form of a man, being destitute of the spirit in which the chief glory of man consists. After he is formed and consecrated, he must remain in the house, he cannot go abroad to defend his worshippers. Even in the house, he is more indebted to the family than they are to him, in receiving their protection, to preserve him from thieves, and their labour to scour him from dust.

14. If we trace his origin a little higher, we shall find he originally grew among other trees in the forest; so that he owes his divinity solely to his maker's choice. In that choice, his maker betrays a consciousness, that he remains a log after consecration; for he chuses the cedar, the cypress, and the oak, that resist the worm, in preference to other trees, because he depends more on the original contexture of the wood, than he does on the idol's presence, to keep the moth out of his own body.

15, 16, 17. Though the natural understanding dictates, that man owes his being to the good pleasure of God; the conduct of the idolater evinces, that the god he serves, owes his divinity to the good pleasure of man: for he plants a tree, suppose it ash, for any useful purpose. This tree is nourished, like other vegetables, by the rain; and in no respect differs from other trees of the same kind. When it comes to maturity, he cuts it down, and a part of the tree cut down, he puts to the meanest uses; he burns it as he has occasion for fuel, whether to warm himself, or to pre-

13. The carpenter stretcheth out his rule, he marketh it out with a line, he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house.

14. He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself among the trees of the forest; he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

15. Then shall it be for a man to burn; for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

16. He burneth part thereof in the fire:

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with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire.

17. And the residue thereof he maketh a god; even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me, for thou art my god.

18. They have not known, nor understood: for he hath shut their eyes, that they cannot see, and their hearts, that they cannot understand.

19. And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge or understanding to say, I have burnt part of it in the fire; yea also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it; and shall I make the residue an abomination? Shall I fall down to the stock of a tree.

20. He feedeth on ashes, a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?

21. Remember these,

pare food, by baking, boiling or roasting. Another part of the same tree, he forms into a god, falls prostrate before it, prays to it, and depends upon it for deliverance from distress. What constitutes the difference betwixt that part of the tree which was burnt, and that which is now consecrated as a god, but the good will of the maker? Did he hearken to the dictates of his own understanding, would they not reproach him, by shewing him, that the god whom he worships, is of the same nature with the fuel whereby he prepared his food?

18. True it is, that idolaters are generally ignorant of these truths, and do not reason thus, concerning the object of their worship, because God has, in justice, inflicted on them a judicial blindness, on account of their resisting the light afforded them; "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved, he sends them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie *."

19, 20, 21. Hence it is, that they do not think seriously, nor reason justly, otherwise they would see the absurdity of worshipping that log, of which they burnt a part, to bake bread and to roast flesh. They would be filled with indignation, at the thought of committing such abominable folly, as bowing down to worship the trunk of a tree. If a person were to feed on the ashes of burnt wood, he would be justly reckoned mad; yet the madness of the idolater is greater, for he relies on a piece of the same wood, that was burnt for providing food and other necessities. This argues a delusion so great, as to exclude the possibility of salvation; a delusion so obvious, that it requires no deep reasoning to discover it, any more than it requires a minute search, to find what a man holds in his right hand †. O ye descendants of Jacob,

* 2 Thess. ii. 10, 11.

† The Spirit of God, in arguing against idolatry, overlooks the sophisms by which the worshippers of images defended the practice. His argument proceeds on these two facts, that are undeniable:

1st, That the image is a lifeless mass of metal, or log of wood.

2dly, That the worshipper falls prostrate before the image, and directs his prayers to that mass of metal, or log of wood. Let us imitate the example, in arguing with the votaries of the church of Rome. We

consider these arguments, by which I reprove idolatry, so as to avoid it. Ye, the seed of Israel, know my service, so that the service of idols ought to appear despicable in your eyes. I first formed you into a national church, and, on that account, have the best right to your service. As being my servants, I will not neglect to afford you deliverance from your distresses, and to bestow on you blessings temporal and spiritual. It is therefore your interest, as well as your duty, to adhere to my service.

22, 23, 24, 25. As a proof of my not neglecting you, I have pardoned all your transgressions, and your great national sin, which interposed as a thick cloud, betwixt you and my gracious presence; therefore return with your whole heart to my service, for I have redeemed you from the guilt and from the punishment to which ye were made subject by your sins. Doubt not the completion of this prophecy, the event is as certain as if it were already accomplished. I hear a mandate issued, I see that mandate obeyed; I hear universal nature joining in a hymn of praise, because JEHOVAH hath effected the conversion of his people. Men of every rank and condition, nations that inhabit every clime, join in ascribing praise to JEHOVAH, because he hath redeemed the descendents of Jacob from their infidelity, and the punishments consequent upon it, that he may manifest his glory in the seed of Israel. Thus saith JEHOVAH, your Redeemer, he who first formed you into a national church, and shall again restore you to that condition: I am the Almighty, the Creator of all things, who formed the heavens and the earth by my power, without the aid of men or angels; nothing can be too difficult for me to accomplish.

must make no account of their sophisms, for they are the devices of a depraved heart, to stifle conviction. Considering images, as a representation distinct from the being represented, is an apology they have borrowed from paganism; an apology which some of the wiser heathens acknowledged to be insufficient for justifying the worship of images. Thus Varro, (as quoted by Augustine de Civitate Dei, Book i. v. chap. 31.)

"The old Romans were a hundred and seventy years without images, and if they had been so still, (says he), religion would be purer."---Concluding, "That whoever invented images, set the city free from reverence to the gods, and multiplied error; because the images, being void of perception, make the gods themselves appear contemptible."

O Jacob and Israel, for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant, O Israel; thou shalt not be forgotten of me.

22. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud, thy sins; return unto me, for I have redeemed thee.

23. Sing, O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it: Shout, ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

24. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself:

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25. That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish:

26. That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built; and I will raise up the decayed places thereof:

27. That saith to the deep, Be dry, and will dry up all thy rivers:

28. That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform

I have likewise a perfect knowledge of futurity, so that no unforeseen circumstance can disappoint my purpose, or prevent the accomplishment of that event which I ordain. Of this prescience I have given many proofs, by disappointing false prophets and their signs; as the magicians and wise men of Egypt; overturning the schemes of politicians, concerning the prosperity and duration of empires; proving, by the event, their boasted knowledge to be foolishness.

26. I have already, in many instances, by the conduct of my Providence, confirmed the word spoken by my servants the prophets; and fulfilled my counsels which I had previously revealed by my messengers. Now the God omnipotent, omniscient and faithful, am he, who declares that Jerusalem shall be inhabited by the converted Jews; that the cities of Judea shall be built, and that the land which lay long waste, shall be cultivated, by the Jews who return from their great dispersion. As a further evidence of the latter restoration, I shall previously restore my people, from

THE BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY.

27, 28. I who said to the Red Sea, Be dry, and it was done; to make a way for Israel to pass over, when I brought my people out of Egypt, shall issue my mandate to the Euphrates, the defence of Babylon, and the river shall be dried up*, to make a way for Cyrus to enter in. I have appointed Cyrus to restore my people to the pro-

* The Euphrates, in the middle of summer, from the melting of the snows in the mountains of Armenia, like the Nile, overflows the country. In order to diminish the inundation, and to carry off the waters, two canals were made by Nebuchadnezzar, one hundred miles above the city; the first on the eastern side, called Nahar-malca, or the Royal River, by which the Euphrates was let into the Tigris; the other on the western side, called Pallacopas, or Nahar-El, the River of the Pool, by which the abundant waters were carried into a vast lake, forty miles square, contrived not only to lessen the inundation, but for a reservoir

with sluices, to water the barren country on the Arabian side. Cyrus, by turning the whole river into the lake by the Pallacopas, laid the channel, where it ran through the city, almost dry; so that his army entered it both above and below, by the bed of the river, the water not reaching above the middle of the thigh. By the great quantity of water let into the lake, the sluices and dams were destroyed; and being never repaired afterward, the water spread over the whole country below, and reduced it to a morass, in which the river is lost.

Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, notes on chap. xlv.

mised land, as a shepherd gathers his flock. He shall, in this respect, perform what is agreeable to me, by issuing his edict, commanding the people to return, Jerusalem to be built, and the foundation of the temple to be laid.

all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE ARGUMENT.

FROM the beginning, to the 14th verse of this chapter, the episode concerning the return of the Jews from Babylon is continued. God promises Cyrus assistance, victory and wealth, ver. 1, 2, 3. He intimates the reasons of bestowing these, namely, to set his people at liberty, ver. 4.; and to convince all who hear this prophecy, that he is the only true God, the Creator and sovereign Ruler, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. By way of improving the subject, he reprehends the unbelieving Jews, ver. 11, 12, 13.

He returns to the principal prophecy, and shews the happiness which the Jews would enjoy, on their resettlement in Judea, in the latter days, ver. 14. He removes the objections which their fears would readily suggest, ver. 15, 16. Confirms their faith, concerning the completion of this prophecy, by several arguments, ver. 17, 18, 19. God commissions the Jews to preach the gospel to the nations that are still addicted to idolatry, ver. 20, 21. He shews the terms of the gospel, by introducing the Messiah, issuing a proclamation to all nations, ver. 22. He intimates the success of the gospel and its effects on foes and friends, ver. 23, 24, 25.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus saith JEHOVAH, to the person appointed in his eternal counsels to be a king, even to Cyrus, on whom I will bestow wisdom, valour and success; that I may subdue nations, by him as my agent, depriving kings of the power of resistance; that I may enter by him, into fortified cities, removing their means of defence.

2. O Cyrus, I will give thee my presence in carrying on war: I will remove the difficulties which stand in the way of thy conquests; even

THE TEXT.

1. Thus saith the Lord, to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings; that they may open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut.

2. I will go before thee, and make thee crooked places straight: I will break in pieces

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the gates of brass, and
put in funder the bars
of iron.

3. And I will give
thee the treasures of
darkness, and hidden
treasures of secret places,
that thou mayest know
that I the Lord, which
call thee by thy name,
am the God of Israel.

4. For Jacob, my
servant's sake, and Is-
rael mine elect, I have
even called thee by
thy name: I have sur-
named thee, though
thou hast not known
me.

5. I am the Lord,
and there is none else:
there is no God besides
me: I girded thee,
though thou hast not
known me.

6. That they may
know from the rising
of the sun, and from
the west, that there
is none besides me: I
am the Lord, and there
is none else.

7. I form the light
and create darkness, I
make peace, and cre-

Babylon's gates of brass* will I break in funder;
and her bars of iron will I hew down, to give
thee access.

3, 4, 5. I will give thee the treasures of the
conquered nations, which had been accumulating
for ages; and were laid up in dark vaults for
security†, in order to convince thee that I am JE-
HOVAH, the only true God, and that I who called
thee by name, before thou hadst an existence in
the world, am the God in covenant with Israel.
For the sake of my servants, the descendents of
Jacob, and of my chosen people, the seed of Is-
rael, I have called thee before hand, by thy name,
and surnamed thee a conqueror, by foretelling
thine exploits, though thou knowest me not as
thy God. I am JEHOVAH, the only true God,
there is none else, in truth, who can lay claim to
divinity. Besides me, there is no God among all
those whom the nations worship; I therefore, not
idols, will give thee strength and success in war;
though thou knowest me not as thy God.

6, 7, 8. I will accomplish this prophecy, that
all the nations inhabiting the earth, from the ri-
sing to the setting sun, may know, that there is
no god beside me, among all the deities they wor-
ship. I am JEHOVAH, the only true God, and
there is none else, can in truth lay claim to divi-
nity. I form the light, and create darkness. I
bestow the blessing of peace, or send the evil of
war. I JEHOVAH am the Sovereign Ruler, di-

* The gates of Babylon, within the city,
leading from the streets to the river, were
providentially left open, when Cyrus' force
entered in the night, through the channel
of the river, in the general disorder, occa-
sioned by the great feast which was then
celebrated, otherwise, says Herodotus, i.
91. the Persians would have been shut up
at the bed of the river, and taken as is a
fact, and all destroyed. And the gates of
the palace were opened imprudently, by
the king's orders, to enquire what was the
cause of the tumult without; when the
two parties, under Gobrias and Gadatas,
fought in, got possession of the palace, and
knew the king. Xenoph. Cyrop. vii. page
28.

Cyrus, were the wealthiest cities in the
world. Cræsus, celebrated beyond all the
kings of that age for his riches, gave up his
treasures to Cyrus, with an exact account in
writing, of the whole, containing the par-
ticulars with which each waggon was
loaded when they were carried away: and
they were delivered to Cyrus at the palace
of Babylon. Xenoph. Cyrop. vii. page 503,
515, 540.

Pliny gives account of the wealth taken
by Cyrus in Asia, Nat. History, xxxiii. 15.
The gold and silver, estimated by weight in
this account, being converted into pounds
Sterling, amount to L. 126,224,000.

Brerewood de Ponderibus. Lowth's
Translation, *ad locum*.

† Sardis and Babylon, when taken by

recting men and events, evil as well as good, to produce the ends of my glory, according to the counsel of my will. But though I overrule evil, I do not delight in evil. On the contrary, I will bestow my grace, at the time appointed, on the human race, plentiful as the dew that descends from heaven, powerful as the showers that fall from the clouds; so that, as the earth opening to receive the showers of heaven, produces fruit abundantly, mankind, being partakers of my grace, shall produce the fruits of righteousness, in order to their eternal salvation.

9. Woe unto those Jews who murmur in their captivity, who repine under that dispensation of Providence, and so contend with their Maker. It is frequently unprofitable for one man to contend with another, though formed of the same feeble materials with himself; but though that be in some cases allowable, it is always improper to contend with God. It is as if the clay should call the potter to account for his conduct, should offer him directions in his work, or charge him with want of skill.

10. It is as if a son should reproach his father, for begetting him, or his mother for bringing him forth.

11, 12, 13. But on the other hand, to those Jews who submit to this dispensation, and rely on God's promise concerning their return, though their faith is staggered through the long continuance of the captivity; thus saith JEHOVAH, the Holy One of Israel, he who hath appointed and shall accomplish all future events*, If ye question me in humility concerning my children, ye may ask boldly such a view of future events as is necessary to confirm your faith and patience. With respect to your captivity, you may rest assured, that it is not too difficult for me to bring about your restoration; for I have made the earth, and created man upon it; my power has stretched out

ate evil. I the Lord do all these things.

3. Drop down, ye heavens, from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation, and let righteousness spring up together; I the Lord have created it.

9. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! Let the potter sherd strive with the potsherds of the earth. Shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou, or thy work, He hath no hands.

10. Woe unto him that saith unto his father, What begettest thou? or to the woman, What hast thou brought forth?

11. Thus saith the Lord, the Holy One of Israel, and his Maker. Ask me of things to come, concerning my sons; and concerning the work of my hands command ye me.

12. I have made the earth, and created man upon it: I, even my

* Lowth properly translates the passage, "He that formeth the things which are to come."

hands, have stretched out the heavens, and all their host have I commanded.

13. I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways, he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives; not for price or reward, saith the Lord of Hosts.

14. Thus saith the Lord, the labour of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia, and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine; they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over; and they shall fall down unto thee; they shall make supplications unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee; and there is none else; there is no god.

15. Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself, O God of Israel the Saviour.

16. They shall be ashamed, and also confounded all of them; they shall go to confusion together, they that are makers of idols.

17. But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting

the heavens, and I regulate all the host of them; and as I am able, so I have unalterably resolved to restore you to the promised land, saith JEHOVAH, the sovereign Ruler. For this end I will raise up Cyrus, to execute my righteous counsels; I will direct and prosper him in all his undertakings; he shall issue a proclamation, to build Jerusalem as my city, and to restore the Jews as my captives; neither shall he demand of them what is customary in such cases, any money, either as a ransom, or free gift.

14, 15. Thus saith JEHOVAH, When your nation shall be restored to Judea in the latter days, the richest nations, as Egypt and Cush, shall contribute their wealth, and the most powerful, as the Sabeans, tall of stature, shall give their influence to promote your honour and happiness*. Being united to you by the bonds of the Messiah's love, they shall bow to your instructions, and form upon your model, as a church, from a conviction that God is peculiarly present with you†; and that there is no other God, but he who has been from the beginning the God of your nation. Do ye doubt the manifestation of this favour in the latter days, seeing ye have been neglected by him so long in your previous dispersion? I solemnly appeal to thee, O God, for the truth of this declaration; that thou hast frequently hid the design of thy providence from the view of human wisdom, and to appearance neglected thy people for a season, while in the end thou hast manifested thyself faithful to thy covenant, as the God of Israel, and his deliverer from distress.

16. Do ye fear the combination of your adversaries? All the supporters of idolatry shall be ashamed of their devices, and disappointed in their attempts to oppose you. Their conspiracy shall end in their own confusion‡.

17. But Israel shall receive not only a temporal deliverance, but likewise, through the Messiah,

* See chap. xix. 23,---25.

† See Zech. viii. 23.

‡ This verse corresponds with chap. xli.

5,---16, where, in the preceding parallel view, this combination is largely described.

that eternal salvation which he hath purchased. Ye shall not be ashamed of your expectations in this world, for ye shall inherit the land given by promise to your fathers; neither shall ye be confounded with the fears of destruction throughout eternity.

18, 19. You shall certainly be restored to Judea; for as I created the earth to be inhabited by the human race, so I formed Judea to be inhabited by the seed of Israel; and as the scheme of my providence could not be accomplished if the earth were to lie waste, so the particular scheme of my providence concerning the church could not be accomplished, if the land of Judea were always to remain waste, or be inhabited by any other nation than the seed of Israel. But I am JEHOVAH, the only true God, having power to accomplish my schemes. There is none among the idols of the nations, who can disappoint my counsels. Again, I have revealed, and publicly proclaimed, by my servants the prophets, my intention of restoring the seed of Israel; I have, in consequence of this intention, commanded them to seek me in the several places of their dispersion, with a promise that they should not seek me in vain*. Faithfulness to them, as well as a general regard to truth and righteousness, require the accomplishment of the prophecy.

20, 21. When this prophecy is accomplished, God shall gather together your nation, in a solemn convocation, and address them thus: O ye that have been delivered from your own infidelity, and ignorance of the Messiah, and from the miseries, which, in consequence of that, ye experienced from the nations among whom ye were dispersed, consider the deplorable condition of the heathen nations, that are yet in ignorance, addicted to idolatry, directing their prayers to images, which cannot bestow temporal or eternal salvation. Do ye, from gratitude for your own conversion, inform them concerning the truth. Bring them near to me, who have been so long alienated from me. Direct them to consult to-

salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end.

18. For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens, God himself, that formed the earth, and made it, he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited; I am the Lord, and there is none else.

19. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I said not unto the seed of Jacob, Seek ye me in vain; I the Lord speak righteousness; I declare things that are right.

20. Assemble yourselves and come: draw near together, ye that are escaped of the nations; they have no knowledge, that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god that cannot save.

21. Tell ye, and bring them near; yea, let them take counsel together. Who hath declared this from an-

* See Deut. xxx. 1,---5.

cient times? Who hath told it from that time? Have not I the Lord, and there is no god else besides me; a just God and Saviour; there is none besides me.

22. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.

23. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth, in righteousness, and shall not return. That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear.

24. Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, even to him shall men come; and all that are incensed against him, shall be ashamed.

25. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be

gether, and weigh the evidences for the truth. Ask them, Who among their idols hath uttered a prophecy like this, concerning your conversion, so long before hand? Who among them hath uttered any prophecy at so early a period? Have not I JEHOVAH uttered it? Does not the accomplishment prove, that I am the only true God, and that there is none else may lay claim to divinity but me?

22. Represent the Messiah addressing them, according to the terms of the everlasting gospel, and saying, Look to me by faith, yield to me obedience, ye people of every kindred, tongue and nation; as the wounded, in the camp of Israel, looked to the brazen serpent, the mean of divine appointment, for their cure, ye shall be delivered from all the miseries entailed upon your nature by sin, and from eternal death at last; yea, ye shall receive eternal happiness; for I am the only true God*, and there is no saviour besides me†.

23. Your preaching shall be successful; for I have sworn by himself, as JEHOVAH the self-existent, that every creature in heaven, and on earth, shall submit to my government, and acknowledge my glory manifested in the Messiah. The oath I have uttered in righteousness, and it shall not be made void.

24. Some shall submit, from a conviction that he is all-sufficient to save; that his righteousness, being that of JEHOVAH, shall screen them from the punishment due to their guilt, while his grace shall strengthen them in duty, and support them in difficulty‡. Others again, who continue to resist his government, shall be put to everlasting confusion in the end. They shall acknowledge his sovereignty, however reluctantly, when he shall "sit on the throne of his glory, and call all nations before him||."

25. At that period, when the gospel is successfully preached to the nations, the whole Jewish

* "This is the true God," 1 John v. 20. "He thought it no robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6.

† "There is none other name given un-

der heaven, by which we can be saved, but by the name of Jesus only," Acts iv. 12.

‡ See Phil. ii. 10.

|| See Rom. xiv. 11.

nation shall be justified by the righteousness of justified, and shall glo-
 JEHOVAH, the Messiah, which their fathers reject-
 ed; and they shall glory in him, as their king, of
 whom their fathers were ashamed.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE judgments of God are denounced in this chapter against the idols of spiritual Babylon, under the names of those worshipped by ancient Babylon.

That spiritual Babylon is here intended, I infer,

1st, From the connexion with the preceding context, for at the time the Jews are converted, ancient Babylon no longer exists, whereas various passages of the prophets shew, that their conversion and the fall of spiritual Babylon, are contemporary events.

2dly, From ver. 3, and 4. where the Jewish nation is represented as having arrived at old age, at the period of Babylon's fall. This is applicable to the fall of spiritual Babylon, but not to that of ancient Babylon.

3dly, From ver. 13. where God promises to "place salvation in Zion, for Israel his glory;" that everlasting salvation, mentioned ver. 17. of the preceding chapter, extended both to Jews and Gentiles, a blessing which the church will enjoy only at the millennium.

The prophet represents the captivity of the idols of spiritual Babylon, ver. 1, 2.; the deliverance of the Jewish nation, ver. 3, 4. Upon the accomplishment of these events, God addresses idolaters shewing the vanity of the gods in whom they trusted, ver. 5,---8. and the justice of his claim to divinity, ver. 9,---11. He next addresses obstinate unbelievers, declaring the certain accomplishment of his predictions, ver. 12, 13.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. The idols of spiritual Babylon are pulled from their shrines, and indignantly crammed into carts, as the booty of the conqueror; the carriages are heavy loaden with their number, their weight is burdensome to the fatigued animals that carry them.

2. The veneration for them is wholly gone, they are altogether pulled from their shrines;

THE TEXT.

1. Bel boweth down
 Nebo stoopeth; their
 idols were upon the
 beasts, and upon the
 cattle; your carriages
 were heavy loaden
 they are a burden to
 the weary beast.

2. They stoop; they
 bow down together;
 they could not deliver

the burden ; but themselves are gone into captivity.

3. Hearken unto me. O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb :

4. And even to your old age I am he ; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you : I have made, and I will bear ; even I will carry, and will deliver you.

5. To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like ?

6. They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith, and he maketh it a god ; they fall down, yea they worship.

7. They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth. From his place shall he not

they are so far from being able to deliver the people committed to their charge, that they are gone away into captivity themselves *.

3, 4. At that time I will manifest myself unto you, and ye shall obey me, ye descendants of Jacob, even all the tribes of Israel ; as I made choice of you from your birth, to be my peculiar people, and preserved you a separate people hitherto ; now that ye are grown old as a nation, I am the same faithful God in covenant with you. I will continue to conduct you through all succeeding ages. As I formed you into a nation, and bore with your provocations, even I will persevere to conduct you by my grace and providence, and will now deliver you from all the miseries of your dispersion.

5. O ye idolaters, how irrational is your worship ; can any of my creatures equal me who am the Almighty ? Can any thing material resemble me who am a Spirit ? Can a dead image ever represent me who am the living God ?

6, 7. A little reflection must convince idolaters, that their most costly images, even when formed of gold or silver, owe their divinity to the maker's choice. Before the image was formed, it was common gold kept in a bag ; when set apart to be made a god, it is weighed in a balance like ordinary silver ; when it is formed into an image, the skill of the goldsmith makes the only difference, for which he receives hire, as for common labour. How irrational thus to lavish gold and silver unnecessarily, and debase themselves, by falling prostrate before a mass of metal ! After an image is formed and consecrated, it remains lifeless and senseless as before. He cannot move from one place to another, so as to protect his worshippers ; every where he must be carried on

* All this is evidently more applicable to the idolatry of modern Rome, than that of ancient Babylon. We do not learn from ancient history, that the images of Babylon were carried from their shrines to any other place. Indeed the various systems of paganism tolerated each other ; and the conquerors frequently worshipped the gods of the nations they had conquered. But these

words, when applied to spiritual Babylon, have been literally fulfilled under our own eyes, in part. Multitudes of images have been pulled from their shrines in France, the Netherlands and Italy. Many carriages have been loaded, and the beasts of burden wearied in transporting them from the churches to the mint.

mens shoulders. He cannot even stand on his feet, unless he is by human art set up erect and fastened; and being once fastened, he stands in need of man's help to remove him from his place. Though one earnestly pray to him, he cannot answer, far less give deliverance from trouble.

8. Remember this, and act like men endowed with the rational nature, by renouncing idolatry. Reflect deeply on it, and ye must be convinced that idolaters are apostates from reason.

9, 10. Reflect on the works of creation; you will find in them a proof of my assertion, that I am God, and there is none else besides me; I am the true God, and there is none among all the idols which the nations worship like me. You have another proof of my divinity, in the completion of prophecy; having foretold at an early period, events which were accomplished long after, and predicted transactions that shall hereafter be fulfilled; thus shewing myself to be the sovereign Ruler, whose wisdom is unerring, whose power is almighty.

11. As a further proof of my divinity, I shall call that people from the east, even those appointed in my eternal counsels, from a far country, and they shall destroy idolaters, as a ravenous bird devours his prey. I have foretold this, my faithfulness shall fulfil it: I have resolved upon it, my power shall accomplish it.

12, 13. Hearken to me, ye, who through pride and depravity, are strenuous supporters of idolatry. I will accomplish the promised reformation speedily; it shall not be far off, as in former ages. My salvation, through the Messiah, shall be made known to the nations without delay. I will establish the knowledge of my salvation in the church, and my people Israel shall be eminently glorious as members of it.

remove; yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.

8. Remember this, and shew yourselves men; bring it again to mind, O ye transgressors.

9. Remember, and shew the former things of old, for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me:

10. Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

11. Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.

12. Hearken unto me, ye stout-hearted that are far from righteousness.

13. I bring near my righteousness, it shall not be far off; and my salvation shall not tarry: and I will place salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory.

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet describes in this chapter more fully the subject which he mentioned at the beginning of the former chapter; the fall of spiritual Babylon. That he has spiritual Babylon in view, appears not only from the context, but likewise from the frequent allusions to this description, in the xviiith chapter of the Revelation, which treats professedly of the fall of papal Rome. Compare ver. 7, 8, 9. with Rev. xviii. 7, 8. and ver. 15. of this chapter, with Rev. xviii. 12. 15.

Again, it appears by comparing ver. 13. and 15. of this chapter, that the same persons called her forcerers, were also her merchants. Now in ancient Babylon, and every commercial city mentioned in history, where these two classes of persons existed, they were distinct. Their occupations necessarily kept them separate from each other; for the genius that qualified for the one, unqualified for the other. But the description is strictly true of papal Rome, and in this respect, she appears without a parallel in ancient or modern times. Her clergy are her forcerers. Their occupation consists in imposing on the multitude, by false doctrines, and pretended miracles, which are no other than juggling tricks. Her clergy are likewise her merchants. They procure the wealth, and all the valuable commodities of the earth, in exchange for mere trumpery, to which their juggling tricks give a value, in the esteem of the multitude; thus they carry on traffic by forcery.

The prophet describes the punishment of Babylon, under the figure of a queen degraded to a slave, and carried into captivity, ver. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. He next enumerates the sins, which in justice occasioned that punishment: as cruelty to the people of God, ver. 6. inconsideration with respect to futurity, ver. 7. sensuality and pride, ver. 8. forcery, ver. 9.

He further intimates the certainty of her punishment, in defiance of the arts in which she trusted for defence; as, her wickedness and impiety, her wisdom and knowledge, ver. 10, 11. her enchantments and prognostications, ver. 12, 13, 14. her merchants, ver. 15.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin, daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground, there is no throne; O

1, 2. The sovereign Ruler shall address Babylon with authority, Come down from thy elevated rank among the nations, remain in a humble condition, O Babylon, surrounded by those who adored

thee, as a virgin encompassed by her lovers. Remain in a low condition; thy sovereignty is departed from thee, though supported by persons famous in counsel and in arms, like the Chaldeans. Thou shalt no longer be esteemed the mart of every desirable enjoyment. Thy great happiness shall be changed into conspicuous misery, like a queen reduced and degraded to a slave, labouring at the hand-mill, with dishevelled hair; or reduced to a captive, uncovering the leg in passing over the rivers, when transported from her native land.

3. The vileness of thy doctrines and practices shall be made manifest to all, so as to cover thee with shame, as a delicate woman is overwhelmed with confusion, when her nakedness is exposed to public view. I will take full vengeance, neither will I suffer any man to intercede with me for thee.

4. Then shall the church triumphantly sing, Our Redeemer has interposed to deliver us, by executing vengeance on our enemies. He hath proved himself worthy of the titles he assumed. He is JEHOVAH, the Lord of hosts, by his power; and the Holy One of Israel, by his faithfulness.

5. The voice of thy authority, O Babylon, which thundered in the world, shall be put to silence; thy glory, which dazzled the nations, shall be put out in obscure darkness; though supported by persons famous in counsel and in arms, like the Chaldeans, thou shalt no longer be reckoned superior in authority to the kingdoms.

6, 7, 8. The vengeance I will take is according to justice, on account of thy cruelty to my people. I was angry with them for their defections, and delivered them into thy hand for correction; but thou didst exceed in punishment*, for thy own gratification, and particularly distressed the elders who were guides to my people, and peculiarly zealous in my service. Thy punishment is just, on account of thy pride, which induced thee to imagine, that thy power should continue for ever; so that thou didst not regard the remon-

daughter of the Chaldeans, for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate.

2. Take the millstones, and grind meal; uncover the locks; make bare the leg; uncover the thigh; pass over the rivers.

3. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered; thy shame shall be seen; I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man.

4. As for our Redeemer, the Lord of hosts is his name, the holy One of Israel.

5. Sit thee silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldeans, for thou shalt no more be called the lady of kingdoms.

6. I was wroth with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thine hand, thou didst shew them no mercy upon the ancient habitation; thou very heavily laid thy yoke.

7. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady for ever; so that thou didst not lay thy things to thy heart.

* "I was but a little angry, and they helped forward the affliction," Zech. i. 15.

neither didst remember the latter end of it.

8. Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayest in thine heart, I am, and there is none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.

9. But these two things shall come to thee in a moment, in one day: the loss of children, and widowhood; they shall come upon thee in their perfection; for the multitude of thy forceries, and for the great abundance of thine enchantments.

10. For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness; thou hast said, None seeth me; thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and there is none else besides me.

11. Therefore shall evil come upon thee; thou shalt not know from whence it riseth; and mischief shall fall upon thee, thou shalt not be able to put it off: and desolation shall come upon thee suddenly, which thou shalt not know.

12. Stand now with thine enchantments; and with the multitude of thy forceries, wherein thou hast la-

frances against thy corruptions, nor believe the prophecies concerning thy downfall. Hear now this further denunciation of judgment, O thou immersed in sensual pleasure like Sodom *! indulging thy lusts, without remorse or fear, like the Zidonians †; thou that sayest to the remonstrances of conscience, I have authority to dispense with all laws, and none may call me to account; I shall not be deprived of my dominion, nor shall I be deserted by those who submit to my jurisdiction, and reverence me as a mother.

9. Yet these two evils shall come upon thee unexpectedly, and at the same time, the desertion of those who once revered thee as a mother, and the loss of thy dominion. They shall come upon thee unexpectedly, notwithstanding the multitude of thy unrighteous arts ‡, similar to those of sorcerers, to establish thy dominion, and the great force of thy delusions on the human mind, similar to enchantments ||.

10. But thou didst trust in thy evil arts, and saidst, None shall see through them; thy delusions, reckoned by thee wisdom and knowledge, have perverted thy own mind, from a true sense of right and wrong, so that thou sayest to the remonstrances of conscience, I have authority to dispense with all laws, and none may call me to account.

11. Therefore evil shall come upon thee, which, notwithstanding the multitude of thy intercessors, thou shalt not be able to deprecate; and mischief shall fall upon thee, which, notwithstanding thy many sacrifices, thou shalt not be able to expiate; and destruction shall come upon thee suddenly, which thy wisdom and knowledge shall not direct thee to escape §.

12. Persist now in thine enchantments, by which thou hast deceived the world; and in the multitude of thy unrighteous arts, in which thou art grown expert, by having practised them from thy

* Rev. xi. 8. "She is spiritually called Sodom."

† Judges xviii. 7. "How they dwell careless, after the manner of the Zidonians."

‡ 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10, 11.

|| "By thy forceries were all nations deceived," Rev. xviii.

§ See Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

first establishment, if peradventure thou mayest be profited by them, so as to retain thy dominion; if thou mayest be strengthened by them, so as to avert the calamities threatened.

13. Thou art wearied in the multiplicity of thy counsels, for they cannot avail thee; let thy clergy stand up for thy defence; let them who practise as many arts of divination as the astrologers of ancient Babylon, forewarn thee of the events that shall happen to thee.

14, 15. Behold they shall be as unmeet to avert the judgments threatened, as the stubble to resist the fire; they shall be destroyed by the judgment. They shall not deliver themselves from the judgment inflicted; and thy destruction shall be as complete, as that of a city so desolate, that no fire is kindled in it, even the passing traveller finds not a coal to warm him, nor a fire to sit by*. Such shall be the issue of their defence to thee, by whom thou hast laboured to deceive the world, from thy first establishment. Thy missionaries, who like negociators, carried thy delusions among the nations, and received the wealth of the nations in return, shall all desert thee, for their own sakes; none of them shall even attempt to deliver thee, for fear of being involved in thy calamities†.

* "The light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee," Rev. xviii. 23.

† "The merchants of these things shall stand afar off, for fear of her torments," Rev. xviii. 15.

boured from thy youth; if so be thou shalt be able to profit; if so be thou mayest prevail.

13. Thou art wearied in the multitude of thy counsels. Let them the astrologers, the star-gazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save thee from these things that shall come upon thee.

14. Behold they shall be as stubble, the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves from the power of the flame; there shall not be a coal to warm at, nor a fire to sit before it.

15. Thus shall they be unto thee, with whom thou hast laboured, even thy merchants, from thy youth; they shall wander every one to his quarter; none shall save thee.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE design of the Spirit of prophecy in this chapter is, to represent the conversion of the Jews, in the latter days, an event still future, but coeval with the destruction of spiritual Babylon, mentioned in the two preceding chapters. That their conversion, and not their return from Babylon, is the event in view, appears from the whole scope of the discourse. For the sins with which the Jews are charged, as the cause of the calamity which preceded their restoration, are characteristic of them since the return from Babylon, and in their present dispersion, but not before their captivity. Thus for instance, ver. 1, 2. they are said to avoid idolatry, but are charged with hypocrisy; whereas idolatry was the crime that occasioned the Babylonish captivity. Again, they are charged, ver. 3,---6. with rejecting the clearest prophecies; now what prophecies did they reject before the Babylonish captivity? I know not any: Whereas the apostles, and after them Christians, in every age, have justly charged them with rejecting the clearest prophecies; because they rejected him "to whom all the prophets bear witness." Further it is said, that at their restoration, they discovered new things which they had not known before, ver. 6, 7, 8. Now they certainly knew before-hand, that there were prophecies respecting their return from Babylon. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel predicted their return, and the time. Daniel understood from their books, that the return promised was drawing near. But neither their fathers, nor they, ever did, or will believe, that they shall submit to Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah, until their conversion takes place. If therefore, we apply the prophet's argument to their return from Babylon, it may be said, What does your arguing prove? But if we apply it to their future conversion, it has infinite force: For what greater evidence can be desired of their obstinacy, and of God's grace, than that they persisted in rejecting and blaspheming for 2000 years, the person whom they afterwards received as the Messiah?

In order to convince them, that they owed their conversion to divine grace, not their own merit, he lays before them the sins with which they were chargeable some time before, and during their dispersion; as hypocrisy, in professing themselves the worshippers of the true God, but without sincerity, ver. 1, 2.; infidelity, notwithstanding the conviction conveyed by the completion of prophecy,

ver. 3, 4, 5, 6.; particularly their infidelity respecting their conversion, ver. 6, 7, 8. Notwithstanding these sins, he intimates his mercy in their conversion, and the reasons of it, his own glory; removing at the same time, an objection that might be offered, from the calamities of their dispersion, by shewing these were for their good, ver. 9, 10, 11.

He confirms the promise of their conversion by arguments; as, his eternity and unchangeableness, ver. 12.; his power, manifested in the works of creation, ver. 13.

God addresses idolaters, challenging them to shew such evidence of prescience in their gods, as he has shewn in the conversion of the Jews; intimating at the same time, that he had appointed the Jews to execute his vengeance on obstinate idolaters, ver. 14, 15.

The Messiah is next introduced assembling the Jews, and addressing them, telling them, that he formerly spoke truth, but unsuccessfully; he now came to them with the Spirit of God to convert them, ver. 17.; he laments the miseries of their dispersion, occasioned by their own obstinacy, ver. 18, 19.; he commands them to quit their spiritual bondage with joy, and to publish their deliverance, for the purpose of converting others, ver. 20.; and their consolation, for the encouragement of others, ver. 21.; together with the final destruction of idolaters, in order to alarm others.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Hear this concerning your future deliverance, O house of Jacob, you shall obtain it from God's grace, not on account of your own merit; for though ye have several apparent claims of right to deliverance, ye have no real claim. Ye are indeed the natural descendents of Jacob; ye bear the name of Israel, which God gave your progenitor, when he confirmed his covenant with him; ye are sprung from the tribe of Judah, and such as associated with them, when the ten tribes apostatized; ye reject the idolatry of the nations, and publicly profess, that the God of Israel is your God. But notwithstanding all this, ye are destitute of sincerity in your attachment to him, and are turned aside from his word, as the rule of your faith and conduct.

2. They reckon themselves the only true church, and to appearance make the God of Israel the object of their trust, who alone is worthy to be trusted, as being the self-existent, and the fove-

THE TEXT.

1. Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, which are called by the name of Israel, and are come forth out of the waters of Judah; which swear by the name of the Lord, and make mention of the God of Israel, but not in truth nor in righteousness.

2. For they call themselves the Holy City, and stay themselves upon the God of

Israel: the Lord of Hosts is his name.

3. I have declared the former things, from the beginning, and they went forth out of my mouth, and I shewed them; I did them suddenly; and they came to pass.

4. Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is as an iron sinew, and thy brow brass.

5. I have even from the beginning declared it unto thee; before it came to pass, I shewed it thee, lest thou shouldest say, Mine idol hath done them; and my graven image, and my molten image hath commanded them.

6. Thou hast heard, see all this; and will not ye declare it? I have shewed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them.

7. They are created now, and not from the beginning; even before the day, when thou heardest them

reign Ruler, yet their insincerity is obvious, in rejecting the Messiah, and the truths delivered by him*.

3. Your infidelity in rejecting him, saith JEHOVAH, is inexcusable, because to him "bear all the prophets witness." The things already accomplished, concerning him, I uttered at an early period; I gave sufficient evidence that they proceeded from my mouth; I made them abundantly plain and intelligible to the unprejudiced. In their season I accomplished them; and they came to pass.

4. I delivered those prophecies, to cut off all pretext of infidelity, because I knew that ye were not easily persuaded of the truth; that ye were untractable in submitting to my will; and impudent, in adhering to your own opinions and practices.

5, 6. Therefore I shewed the things respecting the Messiah unto you, at an early period; before they were accomplished, I published them carefully and repeatedly by the prophets, lest you should say, when they took place, That they might be accounted for, from natural causes, that there was no greater evidence of his divine mission, than there is for the truth of pagan idolatry. Ye have heard the things concerning him, before hand, in the prophecies; behold these things are accomplished, and will ye not openly acknowledge the truth of these prophecies, by submitting to him as the Messiah? From this time, I cause you to understand new things in the prophecies, kept secret hitherto from you, and of which ye had no knowledge previous to their accomplishment, your own submission, as a nation, to the Messiah, whom your fathers rejected.

7. This is effected now, and not at the first manifestation of him; and before this, the day of your conversion, you never heard the prophecies concerning it with conviction, lest you should as-

* The change of person in these two verses is observable; the reason seems to be, That the prophet addresses the Jews, in the first, to urge conviction on them, being

to deliver a truth, in the second, which he knew they would not receive, he addresses a third person.

cribe your conversion to your own knowledge, and not my grace.

8. Certain it is, that you never heard them with faith, and never knew them with conviction. Certain it is, that from the first manifestation of the Messiah, till now, though other nations believed, ye never received the truths concerning him, because your minds were not enlightened by my grace; I knew that, left to yourselves, ye would certainly reject him, and thus violate the covenant I made with your fathers, and by this I would convince you, that ye were deservedly reckoned by me apostates from your origin as a nation.

9. However, for the manifestation of my own perfections, I will bear with you still; and for the shewing my praise, I will withhold the punishment you deserve, so that I will not utterly destroy your nation.

10, 11. Though I brought upon you grievous calamities, in your dispersion, which threatened to consume you like fire, yet these were intended to purify you from sin, as silver is by fire purged from the dross. Besides, I did not retain you under these calamities, until your sins were wholly done away, as men keep silver in the fire, until it is fully refined, otherwise ye had been consumed. But I have chosen you again to be my people, in the midst of your affliction, and will interfere for your deliverance. For the manifestation of my own perfections will I deliver you; for otherwise how would my name be blasphemed? Men would reproach me with want of fidelity to the covenant made with your fathers, or a defect of power in bringing you to submit to my will. Besides, if deprived of the evidence given to the truth, by the completion of this prophecy, men would continue in their ancient idolatry, and it is my resolution, not to permit false gods to receive always the glory which is due to me alone.

12, 13. Do ye doubt the completion of this prophecy? Attend diligently to what I say, and who I am, O ye descendants of Jacob, my servant, ye seed of Israel, whom I have called to the knowledge of myself. I am the same unchange-

not; lest thou shouldst say, Behold I knew them.

8. Yea thou hearest not; yea thou knewest not; yea from that time that thine ear was not opened, for I knew that thou wouldst deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb.

9. For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off.

10. Behold I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

11. For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another.

12. Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel my called: I am he; I am the first, I also am the last.

13. Mine hand also
th laid the founda-
on of the earth, and
y right hand hath
anned the heavens;
hen I call unto them,
ey stand up toge-
er.

14. All ye assemble
ourselves, and hear:
Which among them
ath declared these
ings? the Lord hath
ved him; he will do
is pleasure on Baby-
on, and his arm shall
e on the Chaldeans.

15. I, even I, have
oken: yea I have
lled him; I have
rought him, and he
all make his way
prosperous.

16. Come ye near
to me, hear ye this:
have not spoken in
eret from the begin-
ing; from the time
at it was, there am
; and now the Lord
od and his Spirit hath
nt me.

17. Thus saith the
ord, thy Redeemer,
e holy One of Israel,
am the Lord thy God
hich teacheth thee
profit; which lead-

able God still, the first cause, and the last end of all things; my counsels shall therefore be established. By my power I have founded the earth and extended the heavens, as easily as a man measureth the extent of a span. At my command the heavenly bodies present themselves together, at the times, and in the stations, I have appointed them, so that there is nothing impossible for me to accomplish.

14. Gather yourselves together, all of you that support idolatry, and hear: Who among your false gods have predicted things similar to these, concerning the conversion of the seed of Israel? But if ye will not be reclaimed by arguments, be it known to you, that this people is he whom I, JEHOVAH, have loved; and who, as the instrument in my hand, will execute the divine will on the system of idolatry, and spiritual tyranny; and manifest the power of God, in the destruction of those that support it.

15. I, even I, who am the self-existent, have spoken in the prophecies, that Israel shall execute my vengeance on obstinate idolaters; I have appointed him to that work, in my eternal counsels; I have fitted him for it, by his conversion, and shall prosper him in the performance of it.

16. Draw near to me, ye people of Israel, saith the Messiah, and hear ye this: From my first appearance in the world, I have not spoken in secret, but openly declared, That I am the true and promised Messiah; before that time, even from all eternity, I am the self-existent*. And now, JEHOVAH, the eternal Father, hath sent me and his Spirit, in order to convert you†.

17. Thus saith he, who thinketh it no robbery to be equal with the Father, your Redeemer, the God of Israel in ages past, I am JEHOVAH, the self-existent, your God in covenant, who will now

* The verse literally translated runs thus, Draw near to me, hear ye this; from the beginning in secret have I not spoken; before the time of being there, I am; and now the Lord JEHOVAH hath sent me and his Spirit."

† "Who is it that sayeth in Isaiah, And

now the Lord hath sent me and his Spirit? In which, as the expression is ambiguous, Is it the Father and the Holy Spirit that have sent Jesus, or the Father who hath sent both Christ and the Holy Spirit? The latter is the true interpretation." Origen contra Celsum, Lib. 1.

teach you what will tend to your greatest advantage, who will direct you in the way wherein ye ought to go, in order to attain eternal happiness.

18. I regret the miseries ye experienced in your dispersion. O that ye had attended to my commands, when I first appeared in the world ! then had your prosperity been great and uninterrupted, like the copious stream of the great river, that continually flows ; and the multitude of your blessings, temporal and spiritual, had been innumerable as the waves of the sea.

19. Your seed, that have been diminished by your dispersion, had been innumerable as the sand, and the offspring of your bowels had been many, as the fishes produced in the sea ; your national establishment, cut off by your dispersion, had not been destroyed from before me.

20. But now separate yourselves from the system of idolatry and spiritual tyranny ; avoid ye the influence of those who support it ; do this joyfully, on account of the light ye have received in your conversion ; cause others to hear it for their instruction ; proclaim it to the ends of the earth, for the conversion of the most remote nations ; say ye, JEHOVAH hath redeemed the seed of his servant Jacob, from their long-continued infidelity. He is therefore able and willing to redeem you, from sin and all its miseries.

21, 22. He hath likewise refreshed their souls by his grace, and supplied their wants by his Providence, during the period that elapsed betwixt their conversion, and resettlement in the promised land, in the same manner that he supplied the wants of their fathers, in the wilderness of Sinai, when he caused waters in abundance to flow for them from the rock.

He will thus refresh your souls, and supply your wants, if ye submit to him. But, on the other hand, JEHOVAH saith, there shall be no peace, temporal or spiritual, to those wicked persons, who adhere to their idolatry.

eth thee by the way
that thou shouldst go.

18. O that thou
hadst hearkened to my
commandments ! then
had thy peace been as
a river, and thy righte-
ousness as the waves
of the sea.

19. Thy seed also
had been as the sand,
and the offspring of thy
bowels, like the grave
thereof ; his name
should not have been
cut off, nor destroyed
before me.

20. Go ye forth of
Babylon, flee ye from
the Chaldeans, with
the voice of singing ; de-
clare ye, tell this, utter
it even to the end of
the earth ; say ye,
The Lord hath redeemed
his servant Jacob.

21. And they thirsted
not, when he led
them through the de-
serts ; he caused the
waters to flow out of
the rock for them ; he
clave the rock, and
the waters gushed
out.

22. There is no
peace, saith the Lord,
unto the wicked.

Third PARALLEL VIEW of the Gospel Times, from the beginning of Chap. xlix. to ver. 13. of Chap. lii.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter begins with the Messiah's proclamation to all people, calling upon them to submit to him by faith, ver. 1. ; reasons, taken from his all-sufficiency to be a Saviour, are offered to persuade them to a compliance, ver. 1, 2, 3. ; he complains of his being rejected by the Jews, ver. 4. God answers his complaint, by pointing out several sources of consolation : as, the acceptance of his works, and the certainty of a reward with God, ver. 4. ; further strength, ver. 5. ; success with all nations, ver. 6. ; the submission and admiration of kings to compensate the contempt of the Jews, ver. 7. ; the greatness of the salvation bestowed by him, ver. 8, 9, 10. ; the extensive propagation of the gospel, ver. 11, 12. ; universal joy on that account, ver. 13.

At this period of universal joy, the Jewish nation is introduced mourning and despairing of God's favour, ver. 14. God comforts them by a view of his love and faithfulness, ver. 15, 16. ; by an intimation that the time is at hand for restoring them, and destroying their enemies, ver. 17. ; a direct promise of restoration, where God by a figure addresses the land of Judea, shewing, in vision, the multitudes of people, crowding from all quarters, to possess and adorn it, ver. 18. ; he intimates the great number of its inhabitants upon their restoration, ver. 19, 20.

The Jewish nation is introduced stating an objection to the promise, from their previous calamities, ver. 21. God answers, that he will incline the nations to protect them, ver. 22, 23.

The Jewish nation objects the power of their enemies, namely, those who persecute them immediately before their restoration, ver. 24. God answers, by promising his power to deliver them, ver. 25. and to destroy their enemies, ver. 26.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Listen, O isles,
unto me, and hearken
ye people from far :
The Lord hath called

1, 2. Hearken unto me, saith the Messiah, O ye
inhabitants of distant lands ; and ye people of eve-
ry tribe and kindred, however far off, attend to

my declaration: JEHOVAH from eternity designed me to be the Redeemer of his people; and when in my mother's womb, named me Jesus the Saviour, because I should save my people from their sins, and the miseries that flow from them. And he hath qualified me to be the conqueror of his people's enemies, not indeed by the weapons which conquerors commonly use, but by my doctrine, which shall prove sharper in the heart, than a two edged sword, and when accompanied by his own power, shall effectually subdue irregular lusts and passions, though concealed in its operation from the natural eye of man.

3. And the eternal Father said unto me, I have appointed thee to be my servant, in executing the office of Mediator. If Israel prevailed with me in his intercession, you shall prevail more abundantly; for it is by your success in the office, that my perfections shall be glorified*.

4. And I said, How unsuitable to these promises, is my first reception in the world, among the Jews! I have laboured in vain to instruct them; the numbers of those that received my doctrine, compared with those that rejected it, is nothing. My earnestness, diligence, and miracles, were in vain, for they refused to acknowledge my divine mission. Nevertheless, I am persuaded the work I have undertaken, and the manner in which I have performed it, are approved by JEHOVAH; and though unsuccessful with men, I shall receive my reward from my God.

5, 6. Then said JEHOVAH, the eternal Father, even he who appointed me from the beginning to be his servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob, and gather the descendents of Israel†; even he, JEHOVAH, in whose eyes I am glorious, and who promised, as my God, to be my strength; even he said unto me, in answer to my objection, It is but a small part of my office, as my servant, to deliver from their infidelity the tribes of Jacob, and restore to my favour such as shall be preserved of the descendents of Israel: For as I have given the

me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name;

2. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me;

3. And said unto me, Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified.

4. Then I said, I have laboured in vain, I have spent my strength for nought and in vain; yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.

5. And now saith the Lord, that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him: Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and my God shall be my strength.

6. And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant, to raise up the tribes

* John xii. 28. chap. xiii. 31. chap. xiv. 13. chap. xvii. 4.

† See Lowth's Translation, and the marginal reading.

of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

7. Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, and his holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth, to a servant of rulers: kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship; because of the Lord that is faithful, and the holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

8. Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee; and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages;

9. That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves; they shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.

natural sun to enlighten the world, so will I give thee to diffuse knowledge over all, even the most ignorant nations, to deliver them from error and sin, and to bestow on them eternal happiness, to the extremity of the earth.

7. Thus saith JEHOVAH, the Redeemer of Israel, his holy One, concerning the Messiah, whose person is despised, whom the Jewish nation has rejected with abhorrence, who was subjected to the ill treatment and unrighteous sentence of their rulers: Their contempt shall be compensated by the honour he shall receive from other nations; kings shall be convinced of his glory, and do him reverence; princes shall acknowledge his divinity, and shall worship him. This shall be effected by JEHOVAH, who is faithful to his promises, by the holy One of Israel, who hath chosen thee to be his servant, in the office of Mediator.

8, 9. Thus saith JEHOVAH, the eternal Father, In the season appointed by me, for accepting of the Gentiles* as my people, I will hear thy intercession for them; at the period fixed for giving them salvation, I will assist thee by my providence and Spirit, in bestowing it. I will maintain thy cause, and grant a knowledge of thee, to bring the people into covenant with me, to restore the whole earth to my favour, and to grant thee, as the willing subjects of thy kingdom, nations that were formerly strangers to the true religion†. Thou shalt say with effect, by the preaching of the gospel, to the slaves of sin and Satan, Go forth from your bondage. Thou shalt teach those who were ignorant of spiritual things, to understand and to reason concerning their eternal interests. As the good shepherd brings back the stray sheep, which were ready to perish for hunger, to the pastures where they may be fed; as he leads them to pastures that are near by the way side, and extensive; as including all the eminences; so thou wilt bestow on nations, that were ready to perish for lack of knowledge, the ordinances of the gospel, by which their souls may be fed with knowledge

* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

† The sentiment is the same with Psal. ii. 8.

and with understanding, while these ordinances can be easily attended by persons of all conditions, and shall be extensively diffused over all nations.

10, 11, 12. The willing subjects of thy government, shall not be utterly destroyed, by any of the evils of life; notwithstanding, their condition in the world may be fitly compared to that of travellers in the sandy desert. They shall not be under the influence of unsatisfied desires, for I will feed them with the bread of life, and satisfy their souls by communion with me in my ordinances. The pleasures of this life, that are destructive to the soul, as the hot wind of the desert is to the body, shall not subdue them; neither shall the tyranny of rulers overwhelm them, though irresistible as the glowing sun-beam; neither their sins nor their infirmities shall prove their ruin: for I will have mercy on them, and having in mercy pardoned, I will continue to conduct them; in all the troubles and temptations of the world, I will comfort and support them, by the influences of my Spirit, even as the traveller, ready to faint for thirst, is revived and refreshed, by being conducted to bubbling springs of water. I will diffuse extensively those blessings by the gospel, removing the difficulties that oppose its progress, as if high-ways were made over all, even the most inaccessible mountains, that the heralds of the truth may visit all nations. I will publicly proclaim those blessings; for the heralds that bear them shall not walk in secret paths, but in high-ways well paved, much frequented, and visible to every eye. See, in consequence, all nations crowding into the church; from every quarter they press forward to become the willing subjects of thy government. Lo! these nations come from a very distant country; these again from the north and west quarters; and these from the land of Syene*.

* Michaelis supposes the land of Sinim to mean Syene; his reasons I have not seen, but my reasons are, not only the resemblance of the names, and that there was a city in Egypt called Sin, but that it agrees best with the general scope of the passage. "The countries afar off," were most likely to the

east; for their knowledge of the east, extended farther than their knowledge of the west: the north and west are immediately after mentioned, so that the south is most likely intended by Sinim, and Syene, it is well known, lay to the south of Palestine.

10. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat or sun smite them; for he that hath mercy on them, shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.

11. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall he exalted.

12. Behold these shall come from far; lo, these from the north, and from the west; and these from the land of Sinim.

13. Sin and be joy and breasing, for the Lord's sake, his afflicted

14. But the Lord's sake, his afflicted

15. C forget child, the not have the son of yea the but I w thee.

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17. shall m destroy that m shall go

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13. Sing, O heavens, and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains; for the Lord hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

14. But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea they may forget, but I will not forget thee.

16. Behold I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me.

17. Thy children shall make haste; thy destroyers, and they that made thee waste, shall go forth of thee.

18. Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold; all these gather themselves together, and come to thee. As I live, saith the Lord, thou shalt clothe thee with them, as with an ornament, and bind them on thee, as a bride doth.

13. Let the hosts of heaven sing, let the inhabitants of the earth rejoice, let the most powerful among men express their gratitude most forcibly, in a song of praise to JEHOVAH; because he hath comforted his people, with spiritual and eternal blessings, and will shew mercy to such of them as yet continue in affliction.

14, 15, 16. But when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in*, the Jewish nation shall say in despair, JEHOVAH, who was once my God, hath forsaken me; my Lord, who entered into covenant with me, hath forgotten me. Then JEHOVAH shall answer them, Is it possible that a woman should renounce her duty, and resist her feelings, so far, as to forget her sucking child, and shew no tenderness to the son of her womb? Allowing such an extraordinary case may sometimes occur, yet I, who am faithful and merciful, will not forget you. Your nation, though seemingly neglected, was at all times near my heart, as is the object whose image is delineated on the palms of the hands; and your national establishment, though suspended for a season, I have constantly had in my view to restore.

17. The time is near† when your nation shall be restored to my favour and the promised land; and all your enemies who destroyed you and laid you waste, shall be separated from you, for their own destruction‡.

18. Lift up thine eyes, O land of Judea, look around, and see; all these multitudes of people are gathered together from every quarter; they come to possess thee. As I live, saith JEHOVAH, though thou hast been a long time naked, when deprived of thine inhabitants, surely thou shalt now be clothed, when all these shall possess thee. As a bride on her marriage day, is dressed in attire

* See Rom. xi. 25.

† See verse 14. This dialogue is represented to have taken place, after the fulness of the Gentiles is come in.

‡ Lowth gives a different sense to the words: "They that destroyed thee, shall soon become thy builders, and they that laid thee waste, shall become thine offering."

But though this sense may be true of the Gentile churches, who, from being enemies, submitted to the Messiah, and became members of the church, it is not true if the address is exclusively to the Jewish church, as I apprehend it is, and as the connection shews it is; for their last enemies persevere in their opposition, till they are finally destroyed. See ver. 26.

that is rich, beautiful, and well put on; so thou shalt be possessed by inhabitants numerous, in good condition, and firmly fixed in their habitations.

19, 20. For thy waste fields shall be cultivated, thy desolate cities shall be repaired: the land that consumed its inhabitants shall nourish them; yea more, it is not sufficient to furnish room to its numerous inhabitants, on their present restoration; and they that devoured thy produce, before the restoration, shall be ejected, and rendered incapable of ever injuring thee again. Thy natural inhabitants, of whom thou wast bereaved by their dispersion, shall, on their restoration, say with truth, to the conviction of all that dwell in the land, This place is so strait for us, we must seek further room beyond the limits of the promised land, that our nation may have dwellings.

21, 22, 23. Thou, O Jewish nation, shalt say in thine heart, through unbelief, Who hath procured me these children, whom I have seen in vision, how unlikely they should be mine; I was bereaved of my children by sword, famine and pestilence; my land was left solitary without an inhabitant. I was an exile from my native land, an outcast among all nations, who then could have preserved such a multitude as thou hast shewed me in vision; lo! I was abandoned of God, and a singular spectacle for calamities among men; how could these numerous multitudes be preserved and restored to the land? Thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH, in answer to the objection, Behold I will manifest my power, to the nations among whom thy seed is scattered; I will issue my command, to the people among whom thy children are outcasts; and they shall bring thy sons with carefulness, and thy daughters with cheerfulness, home to their native land. And when settled in the land, kings shall protect thee, as a foster-father his ward; queens shall nourish thee, as a nurse her suckling: yea all nations shall highly reverence thee, and humbly submit to thy mandates, as a church. And at that time, thou shalt know and believe, that I am JEHOVAH, the self-existent; and that all they who rely on me by faith, and

19. For thy waste and thy desolate places, and the land of thy destruction, shall even now be too narrow, by reason of the inhabitants; and they that swallowed thee up, shall be far away.

20. The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, The place is too strait for me, give place to me, that I may dwell.

21. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold I was left alone; these, where had they been?

22. Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.

23. And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers; they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt

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know that I am the Lord; for they shall not be ashamed that wait for me.

24. Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered?

25. But thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away; and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children.

26. And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I the Lord am thy Saviour; and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

wait for me with patience, shall not be ashamed of their hope.

24. Dost thou object, How shall my children be restored? Shall they be delivered from such mighty enemies*, who have seized on them as a spoil? Shall they be rescued from such terrible enemies, who deem them lawful captives, as being forsaken by thee?

25. In answer, thus saith JEHOVAH, Even thy children, though seized on as a spoil by such mighty enemies, shall be retaken; though made a prey of by such terrible enemies, they shall be rescued; for with those enemies that contend with thee, I will contend; and thy children, by my power, I will deliver.

26. And as for those oppressors who made a prey and a spoil of thy children, I will cause them turn their swords against each other, so that they shall destroy one another, as greedily as the glutton devours flesh; and shed one another's blood, as keenly, as the drunkard swallows palatable wine; and then all mankind shall know, that I JEHOVAH am thy Saviour, and therefore faithful to my promises; that I, the Almighty, am thy Redeemer, and therefore unchangeable as to my covenant-relation with the tribes of Jacob.

* These enemies are they who carry on the last persecution against the Jews, immediately before their restoration; of which Daniel says, "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that

time thy people shall be delivered," chap. xii. 1. They are the blasphemous king and his adherents, as appears from the close of chap. xi. and they are the same with the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, Rev. xix. 19.

CHAPTER L.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE whole of this chapter is an answer to an objection that would naturally occur to the Jews, against the promise of a restoration, made in the preceding chapter, and is understood, though not expressed; namely, That it was incredible God should exert his power for their deliverance, who had caused them to be driven from their land, and to endure such grievous and long continued calamities in their dispersion.

In answer, God declares, That their sins occasioned their dispersion, and the dissolution of their national establishment, ver. 1. It would naturally occur to them to ask, What these sins were? In answer, The Messiah is introduced charging them with rejecting him, ver. 2. He foresees their apologies, and refutes them,---as the meanness of his outward appearance; refuted, by shewing that he is God, even the God of their fathers, ver. 2, 3.; that he received the Spirit as man, which was manifest in the efficacy of his doctrine, ver. 4.

He foresees that another apology would be his sufferings; which he refutes, by declaring that he underwent these in obedience to the Father's command, ver. 5, 6.; that this was evident from his fortitude in enduring them, ver. 7.; from the glory that followed them, as his resurrection and ascension, ver. 8, 9.

The prophet makes a practical improvement of this truth, by an address, first to the sincere, ver. 10.; then to the conceited, ver. 11.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2. I know ye will consider, O ye Jews, the many and great calamities ye have undergone, in your long dispersion, as a powerful objection to the truth of these promises concerning your restoration; especially as ye fancy, these calamities are more owing to my conduct, than to your own desert. Thus saith JEHOVAH, in answer, I dissolved your national establishment, and thus disannulled the covenant of peculiarity which I once made with your nation for a season; would you know the cause? As the bill of divorce shews the rea-

THE TEXT.

1. Thus saith the Lord, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? of which of my creditors is it to whom I have sold you? Behold for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves, and for your transgressions is your mother put away.

2. Where I came, ye man? Where was there sinner? I shortened it cannot have I no stroy? Be rebuke, I sea; and vers a their fish I cause their ter, and di

3. I clothe tens with and I make their cover

4. The hath give tongue of

son why a woman is put away by her husband, and may be offered as a proof of the cause, so I call on you to examine and adduce my declarations by the prophets, to shew the cause why your national establishment was dissolved. I ejected your children out of the land of promise, and sold them to the nations; can you suppose that this was owing to any weakness in me; as a needy parent among men is obliged to sell his children for the payment of his debts? Surely not; upon examination you shall find, that for your own iniquities, ye were sold to the nations, and ejected from your land; and that for your national sins, not any change in my affections, your national establishment was dissolved. Ye will readily say, What is our national sin? Wherefore (saith the Messiah) came I to your nation, and ye received me not? Wherefore called I, in the invitations of the gospel, and ye did not believe, and submit to me? This is your great national sin. I am aware of your apology, "That ye did not know me; such was the meanness of my appearance, ye could not know me." Is then my power as God lessened, by assuming the human nature, so that I am not able to effect that redemption, which I came into the world to procure? Have I no power to deliver from sin, and its concomitant miseries, death and hell? how much more, to grant a temporary deliverance, which was all you expected. Behold I am the God of your fathers, who performed such wonders, to deliver them from the bondage of Egypt. At my rebuke, I can still make dry the sea, as formerly I dried up the Red Sea. I can still make the rivers a desert, so that their fish shall be dried up, because there is no water, and die away for thirst; as I formerly destroyed the fish of the Nile, by turning the waters into blood.

2. Wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer? Is my hand shortened at all; that it cannot redeem; or have I no power to destroy? Behold, at my rebuke, I dry up the sea; and make the rivers a wilderness; their fish stinketh, because there is no water, and dieth for thirst.

3. I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering.

3. I can still clothe the heavens with blackness, and make the sky appear as, if covered with sackcloth; even as I formerly covered the land of Egypt with darkness.

4. The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned,

4. As man, the Lord JEHOVAH, my eternal Father, bestowed on me his Spirit; and this was evident in the efficacy of my doctrine: for he

gave me a tongue more persuasive than that of the learned, so that I know how to convey consolation, seasonably and forcibly, to the weary and heavy laden *. My eternal Father continued his Spirit with the messengers of my doctrine, so that its efficacy grew, and prevailed day after day. Your plea, therefore, taken from the meanness of my appearance, is inadmissible.

5. Are you offended by my sufferings? These I endured, as my Father's servant. I voluntarily offered myself, and the Lord JEHOVAH engaged me, as the master engaged the servant who offered to remain in his service for ever, by opening his ear †. Having engaged, I was not rebellious to his mandates ‡; nor did I withdraw myself from the sufferings which he commanded me to endure ||.

6 I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them who plucked off the hair; my face I hid not from shame and spitting §.

7. The fortitude with which I endured these sufferings, should convince you that I endured them as my Father's servant; for the Lord JEHOVAH was my helper, therefore I was not ashamed to undergo an ignominious death; therefore I set my face as a flint, I was not abashed by the contradiction of finners, because I knew that I should not be confounded in the end.

8, 9 The glory that followed these sufferings, should convince you, that I endured them as my Father's servant. My eternal Father justified my claim to be the Messiah, by my resurrection ¶, which followed quickly after my death; by my ascension to his right hand, when I entered on my mediatorial kingdom, so that I could challenge every adversary with the certain expectation of success: who is he that will contend with me? let him come on to the contest. Behold, the Lord JEHOVAH, my eternal Father, is my helper, who

that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary; he wakeneth morning by morning; he wakeneth my ear to hear as the learned.

5. The Lord God opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away my back.

6. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting.

7. For the Lord will help me, therefore shall I not be confounded; therefore have I set my face like a flint; and I know that I shall not be ashamed.

8. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together; who is mine adversary? let him come near to me.

9. Behold the Lord will help me, who is

* Mat. xi. 28. Mat. vii. 28. John vii. 46. Luke iv. 22.

† Exod. xxi. 6. Deut. xv. 17.

‡ John xiv. 31.

|| Mat. xxvi. 53, 54.

§ Mark xv. 19.

¶ 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rom. i. 2. Mat. xxvii.

he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment, the moth shall eat them up.

10. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

11. Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks, walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled: This shall ye have of my hand, ye shall lie down in sorrow,

has promised to make mine enemies my footstool*; who is he that shall attempt to condemn me, as an impostor, or resist the progress of my kingdom? Lo! all of these, whether individuals or nations, shall waste away, as a garment is consumed by time and the moth.

10. By way of improvement, let me exhort every one among you, who in sincerity feareth JEHOVAH, to hearken to these declarations of his servant, and submit to the Messiah. If the sincere is in doubt respecting the Messiah's claim, and can find no resolution of his scruple, let him trust in the perfections of JEHOVAH, and wait patiently, casting his burden upon his God, in the exercise of prayer†.

11. As for you who reject the Messiah, from a conceit of your own superior wisdom and knowledge, and devise arguments to support your error, ye may be directed for a time by your own views, and delighted by your own devices, though these differ as much from those views, and that satisfaction offered by the Messiah, as a spark differs from the light, and the warmth of the fire that human art kindles, differs from the heat of the sun; but at length, the portion assigned you by my power, shall be endless sorrow

* Psalm cx. 1.

† The case of Nathaniel, John i. 45,--- 51. is an illustration of the direction given. He was "an Israelite in whom there was no guile;" yet had scruples concerning the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah: "can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" But these scruples he brought to a throne of grace; "before that Philip called thee,

when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." His own meditations under the fig-tree, being followed by the call of Philip, removed his scruples so far, that he came to Jesus. The address of Jesus convinced Nathaniel of his prophetic Spirit, and removed his remaining scruples, so that he exclaimed, "Rabbi! thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel."

CHAPTER LI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE same subject is continued. Further scruples respecting the promise of their restoration are removed. A doubt of their being numerous, as represented chap. xlix. 19, 20. is done away, by mentioning the case of Abraham when called, ver. 1, 2, 3.

A query, respecting the time of their restoration, is answered, by shewing the previous success of the gospel among the Gentiles, ver. 4, 5.

This would naturally suggest to the Jews another query: If the law is superseded by the gospel, shall the gospel be superseded by another dispensation? This is answered, by observing that the blessings offered by the gospel shall be more lasting than the visible heavens and the earth, ver. 6.

Another doubt, founded on the reproaches the Jews experienced from all nations, during their dispersion, is removed, by observing, that the destruction of their enemies, and the blessings of the gospel, bestowed on themselves, would abundantly compensate these, ver. 7, 8.

Their scruples being removed, the Jews are introduced addressing God fervently in prayer, pleading his former deliverances, ver. 9, 10.

God is introduced answering their prayer, by the promise of a glorious deliverance from their present dispersion, ver. 11.; chiding them for their excessive terror of being swallowed up, which was inconsistent with his power and faithfulness, ver. 12, 13.; intimating the interposition of the Messiah for their deliverance, ver. 14.; his power, ver. 15.; the exertion of that power, in concerting and re-establishing their civil and religious polity, and receiving them again into covenant with him as a nation, ver. 16.

In order to enhance the deliverance, God represents (in an address to the Jews) their extreme misery, at the period of his interposition.

He compares them to a criminal, who is legally obliged to drink a cup of poison, ver. 17.; to a widow deprived of her children that could support her, ver. 18. Their misery is said expressly to arise from famine and the sword; while these evils bear the evident marks of a divine judgment, ver. 19, 20. In these circumstances God interposes, promises deliverance, and that he shall never afflict them in

in a similar manner, ver. 21, 22.; but that he will punish the enemies who occasioned their misery, with destruction.

THE TEXT.

1. Harken unto me, ye that follow after righteousness; ye that seek the Lord, look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged.

2. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him.

3. For the Lord shall comfort Zion; he will comfort all her waste places, and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody.

4. Harken unto me, my people; and give ear unto me, O my nation: for a law shall proceed from me, and I will make my judgment to rest, for a light of the people.

5. My righteousness is near; my salvation

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Ye will readily object, O ye Jews, How is it possible that we who have been a long time dispersed, and by various calamities diminished, shall be numerous at the promised restoration? Harken unto me, (saith JEHOVAH) ye that are sincere and addicted to prayer, I will convince you that my promise shall be fulfilled. Consider well your progenitors, and the circumstances in which they were, previous to your birth.

2, 3. Consider your father Abraham was advanced in life, and your mother Sarah past the ordinary age of bearing children. In these circumstances, Abraham being yet childless, I called him from his native country, to sojourn in the land of Canaan, with a promise that his seed should be numerous, and should inherit the land in which he sojourned; I blessed him, and notwithstanding the improbability, from appearances, I multiplied his offspring, and fulfilled my promise. Thus, therefore, shall JEHOVAH comfort the Jewish nation. His blessing shall make them numerous, and restore them to the possession of their land. So that the land which, during their dispersion, lay waste, and became barren as the wilderness, shall, by the blessing of God on the industry of the inhabitants, become fertile as the garden of Eden; instead of the mourning occasioned by their dispersion, there shall be joy; instead of repining, thankfulness.

4, 5. Ye will readily ask, O ye Jews, When shall this promise concerning your restoration be fulfilled? Previous to its completion, I shall address other nations by the gospel of the Messiah, saying, Attend unto me, O ye people, give ear unto me, O ye nations. The gospel is a revelation from me*; it contains the scheme of my wisdom†, to enlighten mankind. It reveals my righteousness‡, to supply the defect of righteous-

* 2 Pet. i. 16.

† 1 Cor. i. 20,---24.

‡ Rom. i. 17. Phil. iii. 8.

ness in man. And by it eternal happiness prepared by me is manifested, and offered to all who will receive it *. My power shall accompany the dispensation of the gospel, among all nations ; so that the inhabitants of the most distant regions shall submit to me, and rely on me with confidence, for every blessing, temporal and spiritual. At that period, my promise concerning your restoration shall be accomplished †.

6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Ye will doubtless enquire, O ye Jews, Shall another law proceed from me, to set aside the gospel, as the gospel must supersede the law given by Moses ? Lift up your eyes to the heavens above, look down upon the earth beneath, are there any things more stable than these in this world ? Yet even the visible heavens shall vanish like smoke, the earth shall be destroyed, as a garment when it waxes old is thrown away ; it shall not be a meet habitation for man or beast ; but my salvation, promulgated by the gospel, shall endure throughout the endless ages of eternity ; and my righteousness, revealed in it as the ground of that salvation, shall never decay. Are ye discouraged from relying on my promise, by the reproaches ye have received from all nations, during your dispersion ? Harken unto me, such of you as shall know my righteousness, and in heart shall submit to my law, promulgated by the gospel, ye shall not fear the reproach of men, nor be borne down by their revilings. For these proud nations that reviled you, shall be gradually destroyed, even as a garment is destroyed by the moth ; or waste away, as wool is eaten by the worm, while you shall remain a separate people, and the reproaches that preceded your restoration shall be abundantly compensated, by your being clothed, upon your restoration, with my righteousness, which shall endure for ever, by your having an interest in my salvation, which shall last throughout eternity. At the period of your restoration, when your scruples are removed, ye shall address me thus, in fervent prayer : Manifest, manifest thy almighty power, O JEHOVAH, manifest thy

is gone forth ; and mine arms shall judge the people : the idols shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust.

6. Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath ; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein, shall die in like manner ; but my salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.

7. Harken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law, fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings.

8. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool ; but my righteousness shall be for ever, and my salvation, from generation to generation.

9. Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord ; awake, as in the ancient days, in the generations of old.

* John iii. 16.

† Rom. xi. 25, 26.

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 omed to pass over?

11. Therefore the
 redeemed of the Lord
 shall return, and come
 with singing unto Zi-
 on; and everlasting
 joy shall be upon their
 head, they shall obtain
 gladness and joy; and
 sorrow and mourning
 shall flee away.

12. I, even I, am he
 that comforteth you;
 who art thou that thou
 shouldst be afraid of a
 man that shall die, and
 of the son of man, which
 shall be made as grass?

13. And forgettest
 the Lord thy Maker,
 that hath stretched
 forth the heavens, and
 laid the foundations of
 the earth, and hast
 feared continually eve-
 ry day, because of the
 fury of the oppressor,
 as if he were ready to
 destroy? And where
 is the fury of the op-
 pressor?

14. The captive ex-
 ceedeth that he
 may be loosed, and that
 he should not die in

almighty power, as in the days of old, in the an-
 cient generations. Art thou not the same al-
 mighty and unchangeable God, who smote Egypt
 with plagues, who lessened the power and resour-
 ces of the king of Egypt? Art thou not the same
 almighty and unchangeable God, who dried up
 the Red Sea, the waters of the great deep; who
 made the depths of the sea, a path for the people
 redeemed by thee to pass through?

11. I shall answer your prayer thus, The seed
 of Israel shall be again redeemed from their sins
 and from their sufferings. They shall turn to JE-
 HOVAH with their whole heart, and so they shall
 be admitted members of the church, and be re-
 stored to the possession of their own land. They
 shall be filled with a "joy that is unspeakable in
 believing," the earnest of that fulness of joy which
 is in my more immediate presence, and endures
 throughout the endless ages of eternity. They
 shall likewise experience temporal joy for their
 restoration, which shall never be interrupted by
 another captivity; and which shall wipe away
 the remembrance of those painful sorrows they
 endured, and those sighs they uttered, in their long
 calamitous dispersion.

12, 13. Fear not the accomplishment of this pro-
 mise; for I, even I, the God of all power and of
 all consolation, am he that comforteth you by it.
 Consider your own relation to me as my people,
 and say, Is it fit that ye should fear man that
 dieth, and the son of man whose glory fadeth as
 the grass? Is it fit that ye should forget to rely
 on JEHOVAH, your Maker, who, by his power,
 stretched out the heavens, and founded the earth;
 and should every day be in continued fear, because
 of the fury of the oppressor; as if, in defiance of
 JEHOVAH's power, he were just ready to destroy
 you? And now, if ye rely on JEHOVAH, and sub-
 mit to the Messiah, it may be said, Where is the
 fury of the oppressor? for the oppressor shall cease
 to exist.

14. As a mighty conqueror marcheth with
 speed, to set free the captive on whom he has
 compassion, lest he should die in the dungeon, and

his bread fail : So your Redeemer, upon your submission, shall speedily deliver you from the bondage of sin and affliction, so that ye shall not perish eternally, nor be any longer deprived of your temporal advantages.

15, 16. For I am JEHOVAH, who was once your God in covenant, I controuled the most powerful agents in nature, stilling formerly the sea, though the waves thereof roared ; I am the self-existent and the sovereign Ruler. I will instruct you by my Spirit, and protect you by my providence. I will form a religious and political establishment for you, as a church and nation. I will again enter into covenant with you, and acknowledge you as my people.

17. Rouse thyself, rouse thyself, arise from thy calamitous condition, O Jewish nation, resembling the criminal who must drink the cup of poison, put into his hand by the judge. As he feels the greatest bitterness in the dregs, so that his whole frame trembles while he wrings them out ; so thou hast experienced punishment, inflicted by the just indignation of JEHOVAH, for thy sins ; and the concluding scene of that punishment thou hast felt most severe.

18. Thou art like a forlorn widow, deprived of the children that could direct and support her in her distress ; thou hast neither ordinary rulers to direct thee, nor extraordinary messengers from God to support thee, among all thy people.

19. These two evils have come upon thee at the same time, desolation by famine, and destruction by the sword, while there is none either to regard thy sufferings, or to comfort thee.

20, 21, 22. By these combined calamities, thy people are deprived of judgment to direct, and of power to deliver themselves ; they may be fitly compared to a wild bull, taken in the toils, whose fury only increases the feel of his sufferings. These calamities appear evidently to be inflicted

the pit, nor that his bread should fail.

15. But I am the Lord thy God, that divided the sea, whose waves roared. The Lord of hosts is his name.

16. And I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the foundations of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art my people.

17. Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of his fury, thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.

18. There is none to guide her among all the sons whom she has brought forth ; neither is there any that taketh her by the hand, of all the sons that she hath brought up.

19. These two things are come unto thee, who shall be sorry for thee ? desolation, and destruction, and the famine, and the sword, by whom shall I comfort thee ?

20. Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net ; they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God.

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21. Therefore hear now this, thou afflicted; and drunken, but not with wine;

22. Thus saith thy Lord, the Lord and thy God, that pleadeth the cause of his people, Behold I have taken out of thine hand, the cup of trembling, even the dregs of the cup of my fury; thou shalt no more drink it again;

23. But I will put it into the hand of them that afflict thee; which have said to thy soul, Bow down, that we may go over; and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street to them that went over.

by the just indignation of JEHOVAH, to be the chastisements of thy God, for the punishment of thy sins. Wherefore, now that thy situation is such, thou must either be destroyed or delivered; hear this, O thou afflicted nation, thou that resemblest a person drunken, deprived of the power of reasoning and of acting, occasioned not by wine but by thy sufferings: Thus saith thy Lord, JEHOVAH, thy God in covenant, who avengeth his people, Behold, as the judge takes the cup of poison out of the hands of the criminal, while he trembles at the thought of wringing out the dregs of it, with a declaration that he shall not appoint him to drink it at any future period; thus will I deliver thee from thy present distressed situation, with a promise that thou shalt never be placed in a similar situation by me.

23. But I will punish those that oppress thee, who say, Thou must submit to us, that we may tyrannize over thee; whilst thou, unable to resist, art like one laid on the ground, at the mercy of his enemy, expecting utter destruction.

CHAPTER LII. Ver. 1,---12.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE address to the Jews, begun ver. 17. of the preceding chapter, is continued to ver. 13. of this chapter, which begins a new section, and should have been joined to the following chapter.

God intimates the glorious change effected by their deliverance, ver. 1, 2. He shews the certainty of their deliverance, from his free grace, ver. 3. from his faithfulness, which had delivered them on former occasions, ver. 4. to prevent his enemies from blaspheming his name, ver. 5. and to convince them (the Jews) of the truth, ver. 6.

Their conversion is intimated, by representing them as crying out with astonishment, from the forcible conviction they have of the Messiah's glory, ver. 7. The manner of their conversion: convic-

tion begins with their leaders; this suddenly extends to the whole assembly, being accompanied with a visible glory, ver. 8.

The consequences of it are, That they shall be resettled in Judea, and the gospel shall be preached to all nations, ver. 9, 10. a mandate to prepare for, and to march up to the possession of the promised land, ver. 11, 12.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Rouse thyself, rouse thyself, exert thy force as a nation, as a queen decks herself with glorious garments on a festival day, be thou arrayed in the beauty of holiness; from henceforth thou shalt be a holy nation, set free from the intercourse and the oppression of the profane and the polluted.

2. As the captive set free from a dungeon, and elevated to a throne, shakes off the dust of the dungeon, ascends the throne with dignity, and unlooses from her neck the chain carried in her captivity; so do thou, O Jewish nation, forget what was mean and reproachful in thy former condition; exercise authority over thine own people, furnishing a model to other churches; be delivered from the lusts, and from the oppressions that enslaved thee, during thy infidelity and dispersion.

3. For thus saith JEHOVAH, By my free grace I will deliver you. As your dispersion was intended not for my profit, but your benefit; so your redemption and restoration shall be effected, not for my interest, but your advantage.

4. For thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH, To manifest my faithfulness, I will deliver you; I delivered my people from Egyptian bondage, and from the Babylonish captivity; I will therefore gather them from their great dispersion. Of all those who oppressed my people, the Egyptians had the most plausible plea for their oppression; because my people went down voluntarily to Egypt to sojourn there, and that land afforded them sustenance and protection: if therefore my faithfulness induced me to interpose, for delivering them from Egyptian bondage, how much more for setting them free from the yoke of every other oppressor!

THE TEXT.

1. Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city; for henceforth there shall no more come in to thee, the uncircumcised and the unclean.

2. Shake thyself from the dust; arise and sit down, O Jerusalem, loose thy feet from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion.

3. For thus saith the Lord, Ye have sold yourselves for nought; and ye shall be redeemed without money.

4. For thus saith the Lord God, My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

5. Now what have the Lord, he is taken? thought? they over them, howl, Lord, and continually blaspheme.

6. The people shall know that I am God; they shall speak; they shall be

7. How upon the earth, the Lord, that bringings, that peace, that good tidings, that publication, that Zion, Thy

8. Thy shall lift up with the Lord, they shall bring

9. Brethren, sing, wait place; for the comforted

* See
† The
to face,"

5. Now therefore, what have I here, saith the Lord, that my people is taken away for ought? they that rule over them make them to howl, saith the Lord, and my name continually every day blasphemed.

6. Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore they shall know in that day, that I am he that doth speak; behold it is I.

7. How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

8. Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.

9. Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people,

5. And now why should I continue you in your dispersion? saith JEHOVAH, seeing that can be no glory to me; on the contrary, the oppressors of my people have an opportunity to boast of their own power, in defiance of my power and faithfulness; and thus, every day ye continue in your dispersion, my name is exposed to contempt.

6. Therefore I will deliver you, that my people, in the day of their deliverance, may be convinced of my power and faithfulness. For I am JEHOVAH, who promised to deliver you, when ye should request it of me humbly in prayer; and now ye shall find, that when ye thus ask, I shall answer your prayers without delay.

7. In that day, when I shall answer your prayers, ye shall cry out with astonishment, How beautiful is the Messiah, in whom our fathers saw no comeliness! How glorious are his sufferings, with which they were offended! Seeing that by these he is the Messenger of glad tidings, proclaiming peace betwixt an offended God and guilty sinners, offering spiritual benefits that are truly good, announcing eternal happiness! How glorious is he, who hath in truth said, That he is the head of his church, and at the same time, the true God whose kingdom ruleth over all! How delightful is he, who hath manifested himself to us upon the mountains, in our distressed condition, when we were ready to perish by famine and the sword*!

8. All thy teachers shall first be convinced of the glory of the Messiah, and lift up their voice to declare it; the conviction shall extend to the whole congregation, so that, together with their teachers, they shall raise a shout of triumph; for they shall receive a visible manifestation of his glory†, at that period, when JEHOVAH shall convert the Jewish nation.

9. At the same time the ruins of Jerusalem shall be repaired, and instead of presenting a melancholy prospect as formerly, shall have the appearance of cheerfulness and joy: because JEHO-

* See chap. li. 19.

† The expressions "eye to eye" or "face to face," Ezek. xx. 35, 36. are used to sig-

nify the visible manifestations of the divine presence to Israel in the wilderness, Num. xiv. 14. Exod. xxxiii. 11. Deut. xxxiv. 10.

VAH hath comforted his people, by receiving them into favour; he hath redeemed Israel from his sins and from his sufferings.

10. JEHOVAH hath manifested his almighty power in their conversion, to the conviction of all nations, and the remotest regions of the earth, in consequence of their conversion, shall see the salvation of our God promulgated by the gospel.

11. Depart, depart, ye Jews, from the society of the wicked, be ye separated from the sins that are common in the world, touch no polluted thing; go ye out from the sins and the oppressions of spiritual Babylon; be ye holy as becomes a nation peculiarly consecrated to God, like the priests * that bear the holy vessels in the service of JEHOVAH.

12. Ye shall not, at this time, go forth from your oppressors in haste, as formerly from the Egyptians; neither shall ye march along by flight, as when Pharaoh's army pursued you; but ye shall go up to possess the land of promise, with that boldness which faith bestows; for JEHOVAH shall give you success, and the God of Israel shall protect you †.

* See chap. lxi. 5, 6.

† The best illustration of this passage is

Rev. xix. 11. 21. which describes the same event more fully.

he hath redeemed Jerusalem.

10. The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

11. Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean that bear the vessels of the Lord.

12. For ye shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rearward.

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CHAPTER LII. Ver. 13, 14, 15.

Fourth PARALLEL VIEW of the Gospel Times.

THIS view extends to the close of the lxth chapter. It commences with an account of the Messiah, and gives a view of his humiliation and exaltation, while these two conditions are so blended together, that they must appear to belong to the same person.

The Messiah's exaltation is represented ver. 13. his previous humiliation, ver. 14. and the beneficial effects of these, ver. 15.

THE TEXT.

13. Behold my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.

14. As many were astonished at thee; [his visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men.]

15. So shall he sprinkle many nations, kings shall shut their mouths at him; for that which had not been told them, shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall they consider.

THE PARAPHRASE.

3. Behold, saith JEHOVAH, the Messiah shall prudently perform the work which he hath undertaken as my servant, and in consequence, he shall be exalted to my right hand; men shall extol him by their prayers and their praises; he shall be highly raised above every creature in heaven and in earth*.

14. But thy previous sufferings, O Messiah, shall be matter of astonishment to many. [Sinners shall buffet him, and spit in his face, so that his countenance shall be disfigured more than that of man commonly is, and his whole appearance in death, shall be a more humiliating spectacle, than even unfortunate men ordinarily present.]

15. But, in consequence of these sufferings, he shall procure the pardon of sin to many nations, when the efficacy of his death is applied to them by faith, as the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled on the unclean. The most exalted on earth, even kings, shall reverently worship him. They that were ignorant of the truth, shall be instructed and convinced by his doctrine†; the thoughtless and disobedient, shall be made serious and submissive, by the influences of his Spirit‡.

* Phil. ii. 9, 10. Isa. xlv. 23.

† Rom. xv. 19.

‡ Rom. xv. 20, 21.

CHAPTER LIH.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN this chapter, the subject is continued, on which the prophet entered, at the close of the preceding. He gives a minute detail of the Messiah's sufferings, and a general view of the glory consequent upon them.

The frequent quotations from this chapter, by the writers of the New Testament, afford sufficient evidence, to every Christian, of its true meaning ; and indeed, the striking coincidence betwixt the prophet's prediction, and the history of our Saviour contained in the gospel, has converted some Jews.

The prophet intimates the general unbelief of the Jews, respecting the Messiah's divine mission, upon his appearance among them, ver. 1. ; their thorough contempt of his person, and absolute rejection of his divine mission, with the cause, that he veiled his glory, as a mourner hides his face, ver. 2, 3.

He shews, that the end of his sufferings was to make atonement for sin ; together with the necessity of such atonement, ver. 4, 5, 6. ; he points out several circumstances of his sufferings, in his arrestment, condemnation, death and burial, ver. 7, 8, 9.

He gives a hint of his resurrection, and entering on his mediatorial kingdom, ver. 10.; and of the progress of the gospel, ver. 11, 12.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2, 3. But on his first appearance in the world, how few believed the report of us, the messengers of God, concerning him ! How few were influenced by the faith, which the power of JEHOVAH operates in the soul ! For his outward condition, as viewed by the Jews, shall be mean, having neither wealth, nor power, nor attendants, like the princes of this world. Though a descendent of the royal family of David, he shall have the appearance of a tender plant, having no strength in itself, nor support from others ; as a sucker from a root in a thirsty soil is dwarfish and deformed, so in his outward appearance there shall be no

THE TEXT.

1. Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

2. For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

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3. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.

6. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one in his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

7. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.

8. He was taken from prison, and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off, out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

beauty to dazzle the carnal eye, nor glory to captivate the worldly heart. Therefore, when viewed as a man, he is despised, when offered as the Messiah, he is rejected; he is loaded with injuries, and burdened with grief, as a mourner covereth his face *, so he hid his glory from us (the Jews.) He was therefore despised, and we esteemed him not.

4. Surely he underwent those sufferings, to redeem us from sin, and the miseries consequent upon it †, though we mistook the design of them, so far, as to imagine him peculiarly hateful to God as a sinner, and justly punished by his law, as a malefactor.

5. But these sufferings he underwent as our surety, laying down his life as a ransom for us. By these sufferings our peace with God is effected, our spiritual maladies are healed.

6, 7, 8, 9. And such a ransom was necessary, because all men, even the chosen people of God, who are the sheep of his pasture, had gone astray from God's law, each one, under the influence of his own depraved nature. They had therefore been excluded from the favour of God, if he had not laid on him as their surety, the iniquity of them all. The debt he took upon himself, as our surety, was exacted by the righteousness of God, as sovereign Lawgiver; he was made answerable for it, in the sufferings he underwent; accordingly he endured them resignedly and silently, not pleading innocent, when accused, because he was legally, though not actually, a sinner. However, this does not justify the immediate agents, in occasioning his sufferings; by them he is oppressively seized, and unrighteously condemned, and (O the inexpressible wickedness of the men of that age ‡!) he is put to a violent death, as unworthy to dwell among the living. But still it was the design of God, to make his death a ransom for

* See Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

† Mat. viii. 17.

‡ Lowth gives a different turn to the ex-

pression, "His manner of life who would declare." See his note.

the sins of his people. His tomb * was with the rich, though he was condemned with the wicked, because he committed no violence in his conduct, nor did he utter falsehood in his doctrine.

10, 11, 12. It pleased the eternal Father to subject him to suffering, for the ends of his own glory; at the same time he promised him, that if he shall voluntarily lay down his life, as a propitiatory sacrifice for sin, he shall see many of the human race become servants to God, who may be called his children. He himself shall, after death, prolong his days, by rising to an endless life. The government of the church and world shall be committed to him, and he shall rule so successfully, that the gracious purpose of JEHOVAH, concerning the redemption of mankind, shall prosper under his government. He shall see myriads happy, in consequence of his sufferings, and their happiness shall increase his own. By the knowledge of him, as the servant of God in his sufferings, many shall be freed of all the miseries brought upon them by sin, because he shall bear the punishment of their iniquities. Therefore I, saith JEHOVAH, will give him many of the human race for his portion. He shall take them as a spoil from the great adversary of their salvation, because he voluntarily submitted to death, in order to pay their ransom, and was cheerfully numbered with the transgressors, actually bearing the punishment of their sins, as their surety; and made intercession for the transgressors, as their advocate.

* See Lowth's note on this passage. He considers the **ב** as a radical, and the word **במתי** as signifying height, and used for *sepulcher*, in regard, the Hebrews general-

ly buried on eminences; as the Latins call a tomb *tumulus*, on account of the little hillock of earth commonly raised above the grave.

9. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.

10. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and he hath put him to grief. When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

11. He shall see the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.

12. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death, and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

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CHAPTER LIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet, in this chapter, describes the glory of the church, consequent upon the death and resurrection of the Messiah. He shews here, who they are, termed above, "the seed of the Messiah," "the many justified by him," "the portion God should bestow upon him," namely, the Gentiles, formerly ignorant of God, now called to be members of the church; afterwards the Jews, for a season rejected, then restored to God's favour, and their own land.

The person addressed here as a woman, is the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, as appears by the apostle's interpretation of the passage, Gal. iv. 26, 27. "The Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the *mother of us all*; for it is written, Rejoice," &c. Hence there is no intimation of a change in the person addressed, though the first part of the chapter relate chiefly to the Gentiles, and the latter part only to the Jews. They are alike the church of Christ, at the several periods to which the prophecy points. The church, considered as a collective body, is called a woman, a mother; the individual members of that body, are reckoned the children of this mother.

The prophet calls on the gospel church to rejoice, on account of the increase of her members, ver. 1.; by the access of the Gentiles, ver. 2, 3.; by the conversion of the Jews, ver. 4,--8. He introduces God comforting the Jews, upon their conversion, and promising a restoration to their own land, by removing fears which would naturally arise in them, respecting the completion of that promise; as, the fear of their being dispossessed by another dispersion, which he removes, by assuring them, that as he pledged himself to Noah, that no future deluge should dispossess his posterity of the whole earth, so he engages that no future dispersion shall remove the seed of Israel from the promised land, ver. 9.; and that his favour shall continue, when time shall be no more, ver. 10. Another fear, natural to the Jews, at that period, is, that in consequence of prosperity in their own land, they may forget God, as their fathers did. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked, then he forsook God, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation," Deut. xxxii. 15. This fear he removes, by promising that he will form for their nation a glorious polity, civil and religious, ver. 11, 12.; that he will bestow the in-

fluences of his Spirit on them individually, ver. 13.; that he will, by his providence, protect them, in practising righteousness, and preserve them from all injuries, ver. 14.

A third fear arises from the formidable league made (by the kings of the earth and their armies, Rev. xvi.) to resist their resettlement in Judea; this he removes, by assuring them, that neither the counsels, nor the arms of their enemies, should prosper, ver. 15, 16, 17.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. O thou that art the true church, the spouse of the Messiah, the mother of his children, rejoice in the prospect of a numerous offspring. Though at first thou shalt appear desolate, being deserted of the Jews, and an alien to the Gentiles, for whom thou didst not hitherto "travail, that Christ might be formed in them;" yet, in process of time, thy children shall be more numerous than they were under the law, though thou wast then acknowledged by JEHOVAH, to be his spouse in marriage-covenant.

2. Whereas, under the law, thou didst pitch a tabernacle for one nation, to worship in; do thou now enlarge thy tabernacle, for all nations shall worship in it. The places of worship shall be widely extended, and the manner of worship shall be unalterably established.

3. For on all hands, thy children who worship God in faith and love, shall increase; they shall inherit the several countries of the earth, now possessed by the heathen, that are ignorant of God; and at length, the Jews shall return to thy bosom, and inhabit the cities of the promised land, after they have been long desolate.

4. Fear not, O Jewish nation, for thou shalt not be confounded, at the period I have appointed for thy restoration; blush not, for thou shalt not be brought to reproach on account of thine expectation of deliverance. For thy deliverance shall be so great, that thou shalt forget the shame incurred in thy earlier years, by thy bondage in Egypt, and thy captivity in Babylon, and the reproach thou didst undergo in thy long dispersion, when, like a divorced wife, thou wast expelled from my

THE TEXT.

1. Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child; for more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife.

2. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.

3. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand, and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited.

4. Fear not, for thou shalt not be ashamed, neither be thou confounded, for thou shalt not be put to shame, for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more.

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5. For thy Maker is thine husband, [the Lord of hosts is his name,] and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; the God of the whole earth shall be called.

6. For the Lord hath called thee, as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit; and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7. For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord, thy Redeemer.

9. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have sworn, that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth, so have I sworn, that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.

10. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall

5, 6. For thou shalt be received into covenant by thy Maker, as a husband receives again a divorced wife, and he is JEHOVAH, the God of hosts, to whom all things are possible. As thy Redeemer, he will effect deliverance, because he is the Holy One of Israel, who will remember his covenant-relation with thy fathers; at that time he shall be acknowledged to be the God of the whole earth, because he will receive all other nations into the same covenant-relation with thee. When JEHOVAH recalls thee, thou shalt enter into his covenant with peculiar feelings, like those of a woman forsaken, and deeply afflicted for a season, but afterwards admitted to favour; like those of a wife wedded in youth, the object of her husband's warmest affection, but afterwards for misconduct ejected, and now again received; this shall certainly be accomplished, for it is spoken by thy God.

7, 8. The anger manifested in forsaking thee, shall appear little, when compared with the great mercies displayed, in receiving thee again to favour. The continuance of my wrath, during the time I hid my face from thee, shall seem but a moment, when compared with the everlasting kindness bestowed on thee, when I will have mercy on thee, by admitting thee into the bonds of the covenant. This shall surely be accomplished, for it is spoken by JEHOVAH, thy Redeemer.

9. It is natural for thee to fear, that though restored to my favour, and possessed of the land of promise, thou shalt be again ejected out of it, as thy fathers were; but I will deal with thee at thy restoration, as I dealt with Noah after the deluge. As I swore to him, that the waters of the deluge should no more cover the earth, to destroy his posterity, so have I sworn, that I will not be wroth with thee any more, so as to disinherit thee, nor rebuke thee, so as to disperse thee among the nations.

10. My favour shall not only continue with thee, while the earth remains, but after it is dissolved, throughout the endless ages of eternity;

for my love is unchangeable, and the covenant of my peace is everlasting: Be assured of this, for it is spoken by JEHOVAH, who beareth towards thee the most tender affection.

11, 12. It is natural for thee, deeply impressed with the evil of sin, to fear, that prosperity will alienate thy heart from me, so that thou shalt fall away from thy allegiance, as thy fathers did*. O thou afflicted and agitated by this fear, as the sea by the storm, refusing to receive comfort from the prospect of thy restoration! I will preserve thee from falling away; I will form for thee a national establishment†, civil and religious, as far superior to any establishment that ever obtained among men, as a city built of precious stones, is beyond the most finished specimen of human architecture.

13. I will bestow the influences of my Spirit on thy children, they shall be individually taught by JEHOVAH, so that the prosperity of thy children, spiritual as well as temporal, shall be great.

14. Thou shalt adhere firmly to the practice of righteousness, and by it thy national prosperity shall be established. And I will guide thee, and protect thee by my providence, so that thou shalt neither feel, nor fear, oppression from within, nor dread the attacks of foreign enemies from without.

15, 16. Thou fearest the formidable league, formed by the kings of the earth, and their armies, against thy resettlement in Judea‡; they shall be indeed leagued together, but not by my command; on the contrary, they are collected by the spirit of delusion and error||; and however formidable their conspiracy, they shall be discom-

not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.

11. Oh thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires.

12. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones.

13. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children.

14. In righteousness shalt thou be established; thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear, and from terror, for it shall not come near thee.

15. Behold, they shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee, shall fall for thy sake.

* Deut. xxxii. 13.

† "These seem to be general images, to express beauty, magnificence, purity, strength and solidity, agreeable to the ideas of the eastern nations, and to have never been intended to be strictly scrutinized, or minutely and particularly explained, as if they had, each of them, some precise moral or spiritual meaning." Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

The idea suggested here, is the same that

is enlarged on Rev. xxi, xxii. chap which refer to the national polity of the Jews, after their conversion to Christianity, and their establishment in Judea. It differs from the new earth, as a part from the whole, and from the camp of the saints Rev. xx. 9. as being distinct from the Gentile churches.

‡ See Rev. xix. 19. See likewise, Joel iii. 13,--17.

|| See Rev. xvi. 13, 14. 16.

16. Behold I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work, and I have created the warrior to destroy.

fitted for thy sake. Consider well that I am the creator of the smith, who maketh weapons of war. It is in consequence of skill imparted by me, that he formeth instruments suited to the work in which they are to be employed. I am likewise the creator of the conqueror, and it is in consequence of the wise appointment of my providence, that he is enabled to lay waste and destroy. Is it not therefore an easy matter for me, to disappoint the combination formed against thee?

17. No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

17. Be assured therefore, that the efforts of thine enemies against thee, shall not prosper; neither shall their designs or calumnies against thee prevail. Success, in subduing enemies shall be thine heritage, as it will be the heritage of all the true servants of JEHOVAH, in the latter days*; yet not on account of any merit in themselves, but for the sake of my grace, through the Redeemer, which will freely pardon their sins, saith JEHOVAH.

* "Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two-edged sword in their hand, to execute vengeance on the heathen, &c. this honour have all his saints," Psalm cxlix. 9. "And the kingdom, and the do-

minion, and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High," Dan. vii. 27.

CHAPTER LV.

THE ARGUMENT.

I CONSIDER the greater part of this chapter as an illustration of the three first verses of the preceding chapter. There, the enlargement of the church, by the accession of the Gentiles, is represented in general terms; here, the spirit of prophecy points out the *means* by which the Gentiles should be introduced into the church; not by making choice of particular nations, as formerly of the family of Abraham, and then multiplying them in the way of ordinary generation; but by the ministry of the word, proclaiming grace and salvation to persons of every family and nation, that are willing to lay hold of them.

The Messiah is introduced uttering a proclamation, containing the terms of the gospel, and urging a compliance with these terms, by various arguments, ver. 1,—7. The success of the gospel is represented, ver. 8,—11. The two last verses coincide with the remaining part of the liv. chap. They briefly recapitulate the restoration of the Jews, and are added here to shew, that the successful preaching of the gospel among the Gentiles, shall precede that restoration.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Previous to the restoration of the Jewish nation, the Messiah shall, by his servants, proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, to the other nations, saying, Ho, let every one, of whatever kindred, tongue or nation, who ardently desires happiness, come to the ordinances of the gospel, when blessings spiritual and eternal, are as freely and abundantly offered, as water where it abounds most; blessings that will satisfy the desire of those who receive them, even in this life, as much as water allays the thirst of the traveller, in the parched desert. Come ye, who are sensible of your need of spiritual benefits, as the buyer is sensible he stands in need of the commodity he would purchase. Yea, believe on me, and thus accede to my terms, as the buyer agrees to those of the sel-

THE TEXT.

1. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price.

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ler; ye shall partake of benefits that will afford joy and nourishment to your souls, as wine and milk afford to the body. Ye shall receive them freely, without any merit on your part, to give a claim of right to them.

2. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness.

2. Wherefore do ye ardently seek happiness, in the enjoyments of this world, that must ever reward your expectations with disappointment; yea, resemble persons that are hungry, bestowing their money on that which is not bread, and their labour for that which cannot satisfy their appetite: for after the fullest participation of worldly good, there is a craving desire for something more. But attend to my invitation, and believe on me; ye shall receive blessings truly good, blessings suitable to your spiritual frame, and lasting as your immortal souls: yea, your souls, in partaking of them, shall be more abundantly gratified, than is the nicest palate, by a feast of the richest delicacies.

3. Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.

3, 4. Attend to my invitation, come unto me with faith and love, comply with my call, and your souls shall enjoy a spiritual life here, being set free from the stings of a guilty conscience, and the tyranny of irregular passions; yea, they shall enjoy eternal life hereafter. I will give you an interest in that covenant, of which I (the son of David) am surety; a covenant whose blessings are everlasting, and are rendered secure, to those who have an interest in it, through my suretyship. Attend, saith the eternal Father, in confirmation of these invitations; I have appointed the Messiah, the son of David, to bear witness to the truth, among all people, as the great prophet, by revealing to them the way of salvation; I have ordained him a leader to his own people, as being the surety of the covenant, and the captain of their salvation. I have invested him with authority over all nations, as the king and head of the church, to issue laws, and to enforce obedience.

4. Behold I have given him for a witness to the people; a leader and commander to the people.

5. Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee, shall run unto thee, because of the

5. As for thee, O Messiah, saith the eternal Father, Behold nations, to whom thou didst not reveal thyself, heretofore, thou shalt now call by the gospel; and nations that were formerly ignorant of thee, shall cheerfully comply with thy

call; because JEHOVAH, thy God, shall make thy call effectual, by his power; and the Holy One of Israel shall confirm the word, by his Spirit, in order to glorify thee.

6, 7. Endeavour diligently to acquire a knowledge of JEHOVAH, (saith the Messiah) during the short uncertain period of human life, in which he hath promised to be found of them that seek him; use carefully the several means appointed by the gospel, particularly prayer, in which he is near to them that call upon him; but if the present opportunity is neglected, he will be hereafter forever afar from you. In order to encourage you, be assured that every wicked and unrighteous man, who resolves to forsake sin in heart and life, and to turn to JEHOVAH with unfeigned faith, and genuine repentance, shall be received into favour, however unworthy in himself; and obtain forgiveness for his past sins, however enormous his crimes have been.

8, 9. I confirm the declaration, saith the eternal Father; let not the fears of the true convert suggest, nor the declarations of the illiberal assert, that I will not forgive the penitent sinner; for my purposes and acts of mercy are far beyond those of the most liberal among men. They exceed these, as much as the heavens, immense in their extent, exceed the limits of the earth.

10. Verily, I esteem it my glory to give effect to every purpose I have formed; thus, in the natural world, I purposed that the heavens should make the earth fertile; accordingly the rain and the snow descend from the heavens, each in their season, they moisten the earth, and cause it to produce food, for every living creature; and seed to continue that food, year after year.

11. Just so I have purposed, that the gospel which proceeds from me, shall not be fruitless, but prove the mean of leading sinners to repentance, that they may obtain forgiveness and salvation. Accordingly it shall effect what I have willed, and make the purpose succeed, for which I have sent it.

Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel for he hath glorified thee.

6. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found call ye upon him while he is near.

7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord; and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

9. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

10. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither but watereth the earth and maketh it bring forth and bud, that I may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater.

11. So shall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please; and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

12. For out with the mountain hills shall before you, and of the field their hands

13. In thorn shall the fir-tree head of the come up tree; and to the Lord for an ever that shall off.

THE fu mer she church, are all, of grace offered gard, st the tem particul children be exclu At th the prof of the of their vidence

12. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace; the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

13. Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name; for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

12, 13. When the gospel shall thus succeed with the Gentiles, surely ye (O Jews) shall experience its power, in your conversion; with joy shall ye go forth from the prison of your infidelity. Ye shall be led to the Messiah, so as to obtain peace with him; your conversion will occasion universal joy over all the church, as if the mountains and hills should burst forth into song, and all the trees of the field should clap their hands. At the same time, a universal change shall take place among mankind; virtue and holiness shall spring up, in place of vice and wickedness, which formerly prevailed; just as the wilderness, when cultivated by the hand of industry, instead of briars and thorns, produces trees that are useful and beautiful; and this change shall glorify JEHOVAH, shall be an evidence of the truth of his word, and shall continue while the earth remains.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter, from the beginning to the ninth verse, contains a further illustration of the call of the Gentiles. As the former shewed the means by which they were to be brought into the church, this describes, in general, the persons introduced, and these are all, without exception or distinction, who lay hold of the offers of grace and salvation made in the gospel. No objection will be offered against such, on account of kindred or condition. In regard, strangers and their children, and eunuchs, were excluded from the temple and the priesthood, by the legal dispensation, they are particularly mentioned, and promised all the special privileges of the children of God; to intimate, that if these are admitted, none shall be excluded, who comply with the terms of the gospel.

At the ninth verse, the prophet enters on a new subject, which he prosecutes in the three following chapters; namely, the rejection of the Jewish nation, and their dispersion; together with the causes of their dispersion, in order to vindicate the conduct of divine providence towards them.

These events are properly introduced here, as being coeval with the progress of the gospel among the Gentiles, the subject of the prophet in this and the two preceding chapters. Besides the illustration of these events may be considered as the answer to a question which would readily occur, from what was said ver. 8. of this chap. "who gathereth the outcasts of Israel." The question is, How, and why were they cast out? Nor is it only here, but likewise in the several parallel views of the gospel times. Mention is made of the rejection and dispersion of the Jews, as events which had long preceded their conversion and restoration; as chap. xl. 22. xlii. 22,—25. xlix. 14. liv. 3. The great cause of their rejection and dispersion is, in general, their own wickedness. To illustrate this cause fully, the prophet represents, first, the character of their rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, under the title of Shepherds, from the ninth verse to the close of this chapter; then, the conduct of the people in the three following chapters.

In delineating the character of the shepherds, the prophet has view to all the corrupt civil rulers, and religious guides, who appeared in the Jewish nation, betwixt his own time, and the Roman dispersion; but as nations and individuals, not reformed, make progress in corruption, the character given here, is most applicable to the rulers of the nation in our Saviour's time, who had arrived at the height of degeneracy, and by their corrupt government, opened the nation for the judgment that soon followed.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus saith JEHOVAH, Execute judgment as a nation, practise righteousness as individuals, and thus prepare for the reception of the Messiah*. The period of manifesting my salvation is near; the Messiah is just ready to come; the time of the gospel-dispensation is at hand, in which my righteousness is revealed, as the ground of justification to all that believe†.

2, 3. Happy is the man, however wretched his condition in other respects, who thus prepares for the reception of the Messiah. Yea, happy is every individual of the human race, who layeth hold, by faith, of the righteousness and salvation offered by him, who respecteth the ordinances of the gos-

THE TEXT.

1. Thus saith the Lord, Keep ye judgment, and do justice for my salvation is near to come, and my righteousness to be revealed.

2. Blessed is the man that doth this, and the son of man that layeth hold on it, that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and keepeth his hand from doing any evil.

* The exhortation and the arguments here, are the same with those used by John the Baptist, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Mat. iii.

† The excellency of the gospel is thus described by the apostle, "For therein is revealed the righteousness of God, from faith to faith," Rom. i. 17.

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pel *, and neglecteth them not, and who, by their influence, is restrained from the practice of every wickedness. Under the gospel-dispensation, persons of all nations and conditions shall be admitted to the privileges of the people of God; so that the descendents of strangers, excluded by the law from the congregation of God's people, if they believe on the Messiah, shall have no occasion to say, JEHOVAH hath excluded us from the privileges of his people; for they shall be no longer "strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith." Neither shall eunuchs, though incapable of multiplying the seed of Abraham, and excluded, by the law, from the priesthood, have occasion to say, We are incapable of benefiting the church, by increasing its members, as much as a withered tree is incapable of producing fruit.

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4, 5. For thus saith JEHOVAH, to the eunuchs, Whoever of them shall respect my ordinances, shall make choice of that rule of conduct in which I delight, and shall stedfastly maintain their covenant-relation with me, by faith in the Messiah, the surety of it: To them will I give an honourable name in my church, by admitting them to all the privileges of my people, and by enabling them to benefit others; seeing the members of the church are now increased, not by those, "who are born of the will of the flesh, but by those who are born of the will of God," (John i. 13.) Yea I will perpetuate their fame more abundantly, than their posterity could do. Their posterity at farthest could only countinue their name to the end of this world; but I will bestow on them everlasting honour, "a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Also the sons of
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6. And the descendents of strangers, who believe on JEHOVAH, who obey him, love him, and devote themselves to his service, all that respect the ordinances of the gospel, and neglect them not,

Why should not the Sabbath here sig-
gospel-ordinances, as well as Mount
signifies the gospel-church, and the le-

gal sacrifices are put for the spiritual sacri-
fices of the Christian.

and maintain their covenant-relation with me, by faith in the Messiah.

7. Them will I bring into my church, and I will make them joyful, by my presence vouchsafed in the ordinances dispensed in it. Their devout affections, and pious resolutions, shall be acceptable to me through the merits and mediation of the Messiah; for in his time, my church shall be open for the admission of all nations, who worship me in spirit and in truth.

8. Thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH, who will gather together, in the end, the whole seed of Israel, to enjoy the privileges of church members, and the possession of their land, after they had been ejected from the one, and dispersed from the other, Yet besides these, I will gather other nations, to the knowledge and the service of the Messiah, so as to be members of the same society with the people of Israel, though these nations have, for the present, no share in their privileges.

9. But you will readily say, How were the seed of Israel ejected and dispersed? In answer to that question, I heard a proclamation, issued by God, to all the wild beasts of the field and of the forest, to gather together, in order to devour human flesh; to intimate, that there shall be a great slaughter* of the Jews, by a fierce people, after which they shall be dispersed among the nations. Would you know the reasons why God will reject the Jewish nation, and disperse them? These are the sins with which the whole nation, the rulers, as well as the people, are chargeable.

10. As to the rulers, civil and ecclesiastical, though God committed his people to their care, appointing them as watchmen to warn the people of danger, and as shepherds to feed and guide them; they all resemble blind watchmen, who

Lord, to be his servants, every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant.

7. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer; their burnt-offerings, and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon mine altar; for mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people.

8. The Lord God, which gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith, Yet will I gather others to him, besides those that are gathered unto him.

9. All ye beasts of the field, come to devour; yea, all the beasts of the forest.

10. His watchmen are blind; they are ignorant; they are dumb dogs, they can not bark, sleeping, by

* It is customary with the prophets to represent any great destruction of men, by calling together the wild beasts, or ravenous birds; alluding to the multitudes slaughtered, as prey ready to be devoured. Thus, Jer. xii. 9. Ezek. xxxix. 17. Rev. xix. 17,

18. And our Lord, pointing to the same event the prophet has in view, the slaughter of the Jews by the Romans, says, "Wherever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together," Mat. xxiii. 18.

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do not discover the enemy, until he is in possession of the city; and therefore cannot warn others of their danger. They are not sensible of the evil of sin, and therefore cannot rouse others out of their security. They are ignorant of the way of salvation, having no experimental knowledge of the truth; and therefore cannot lead others in it*. They allow sin to prevail among the people without reproof, like dumb dogs, that give no alarm of the approach of thieves and robbers. They are so fond of carnal ease, that they will not disturb themselves, by rebuking others; under the influence of a vain imagination, they promise themselves a delusive happiness, and lay themselves down to rest in the lap of sinful pleasure.

11. Yea, they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough; and they are shepherds that cannot understand, they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter.

11. Their avarice is insatiable, like the voracious maw of a greedy dog, which devours every offal, as delicious food, and yet is not glutted. While they have no understanding in the way of their office, to improve time, and seize opportunities for promoting the good of those committed to their charge, they suffer no time to be lost, nor opportunity to slip them, by which they can advance their worldly gain, and hoard up wealth.

12. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant.

12. They encourage one another to intemperance, their whole concern is to provide strong drink, while they flatter themselves, that the career of their pleasures will never have an issue, and believe not that they shall be called to an account for their conduct, either here or hereafter.

* So our Lord says of the Pharisees, "If the blind lead the blind, they shall both fall in the ditch."

CHAPTER LVII.

THE ARGUMENT.

AFTER giving a character of the rulers, the prophet proceeds to describe the conduct of the people, which had so justly provoked God to expel them from their land, and reject them for a time, from being members of his church. He gives three different views of their conduct, during three several periods of their existence as a nation. The first view is given us in this chapter, and respects their conduct, during the period that preceded the Babylonish captivity. The second is given, chap. lviii. and represents their conduct, from the time of their return, until their dispersion by the Romans. The third view we have, chap. lix. which shews their obstinate wickedness, during their dispersion. Each of these views concludes with an intimation of their final restoration to the Divine favour; that the greatness and freeness of the Divine mercy, might appear the more conspicuous, when contrasted with their deep depravity.

The sins with which they are charged in this chapter, and which were characteristic of them, previous to the Babylonish captivity, are, a neglect to improve God's providence, ver. 1, 2.; a contempt of the admonitions given by the prophets, ver. 3, 4.; a rage for idolatry, ver. 5,—8.; a reliance on human aid, rather than the Divine protection, in time of danger, ver. 9,—11.

Threatenings are denounced against these sinners, ver. 12, 13.; promises of restoration to the penitent are added, ver. 14,—19.; the obstinately impenitent are excluded, ver. 20, 21.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1, 2, 3. Another reason for rejecting the Jewish nation is, the wickedness of the people. They were irreclaimable; they would not receive instruction, either from the providence, or from the word of God. As to the providence of God, when he removed, by an untimely death, the few righteous and pious persons who were among the people; they did not lay this to heart, nor understand the language of the dispensation. They did

THE TEXT.

1. The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering, that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.

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not consider, that God thereby intimated his having a controversy with the nation; just as kings intimate their displeasure against any particular nation, by withdrawing their ambassadors who lived among them. They did not understand that judgment would certainly come upon them, though they might have understood this, from God's calling away the persons, who, by their prayers, had hitherto prevented the judgment. They did not believe, that judgment would be executed speedily; though they might have known, that righteous and pious men were removed by an early death, in order to preserve them from being sharers in the calamities about to be inflicted on the nation*. But though the death of the righteous, was thus unprofitable to the body of the people, it was the best exchange for themselves. They quitted the tumults of time, for the tranquillity of eternity; and while their bodies rest in the grave, until the morning of the resurrection, their souls were admitted to those happy mansions, where the righteous only have access. The people were equally irreclaimable by the word, as by the providence of God. For thus saith JEHOVAH, Ye glory in being the descendents of Abraham, and fancy yourselves the only legitimate children of God. But let us examine your claim. In consequence of your conduct, ye are as offensive to me, as if ye had been descendents of the Chaldeans, those forcerers from among whom I called Abraham. By your manners ye seem to be the illegitimate race of the Canaanites, whom I expelled out of the land, for their wickedness†.

2. He shall enter into peace; they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.

3. But draw near hither, ye sons of the forcerers, the seed of the adulterer, and the whore.

4. Against whom do ye sport yourselves? against whom make ye a wide mouth, and draw out the tongue?

4. When ye hear the admonitions of my servants the prophets, ye not only reject them, but ye mock those who give them. Is this mocking men? When ye hear your vices reproved, ye wi-

* It was promised good Josiah, whose heart was tender before the Lord, that the evil he feared (that is the judgments threatened against the nation) should not come in his day; and the promise was fulfilled, by bringing him from this world at an early period of life.

† I take the sense of the passage, to be the same with that of the prophet, Ezek. xvi. 3. "Thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother was an Hittite."

den the mouth, and roll the tongue, gestures expressive of your contempt. Is this a contempt of men? Nay, but a contempt of me, who commissioned them to deliver those reproofs. Do not these things prove, that ye are apostates from the principles of your father, Abraham; that ye are not the legitimate children of God, but a bastard race, having no right to the blessings of the covenant, and deserving to be expelled from your inheritance?

5, 6. Ye burn with an insatiable lust of idols. Under every green tree, ye worship Ashtoreth, committing there the most abominable impurities. In the vallies, and under the cliffs of the rocks, ye slay your children, as sacrifices to Molech, committing there the most atrocious murders. Ye are so unreasonable, that every smooth stone * ye find, though ye light upon it accidentally in the valley, ye consider it as a god; call it your portion; esteem it the director of your lot, and perform the most solemn acts of worship before it. Is it possible for me, when I behold these things, to acquiesce in you as my peculiar people?

7, 8. As an insatiable adulteress sets her bed every where, and pollutes every place with her lewdness, so thou hast defiled every place with thine idolatries. On high and lofty mountains, thou hast offered sacrifice publicly. Behind the door, and the door-posts, or in some corner of thy house, thou hast set up thine idols secretly: by these things thou hast departed from me, and art wholly gone astray from thy allegiance, like an adulteress, who enlarges her bed, to commit adultery with many lovers. Thou hast made a covenant with idols, and thus thou hast violated thy covenant with me. Thou hast loved inter-

are ye not children of transgressions, a seed of falsehood?

5. Enflaming yourselves with idols, under every green tree; slaying the children in the vallies, under the cliffs of the rocks.

6. Among the smooth stones of the stream is thy portion; they, they are thy lot; even to them hast thou poured a drink-offering, thou hast offered a meat offering, should I receive comfort in thee?

7. Upon a lofty and high mountain hast thou set thy bed, even thither wentest thou up to offer sacrifice.

8. Behind the door also, and the posts, hast thou set up thy remembrance; for thou hast discovered thyself to another than me, and art gone up; thou hast enlarged thy bed, and made thee a covenant with them; thou lovedst their bed, when thou sawest it.

* The practice of worshipping smooth stones, was very common, in different ages and places. Arnobius, lib. i. gives an account of his own practice, in this respect, before he became a Christian. "If I beheld a smooth stone, besmeared with oil, I flattered it, I spoke to it, and requested benefits from it, never reflecting that it was a dead mors." Clemens Alexand. Strom. lib. vii. speaks of the worshippers of every

smooth stone, in a proverbial way, to denote one given up to superstition. And accordingly Theophrastus, has marked this, as one strong feature, in the character of the superstitious man: "Passing by the anointed stones in the streets, he takes out his vial of oil, and pours it on them; and having fallen on his knees, and made his adoration, he departs."

Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

course with them, and therefore deservest to be cast out from all intercourse with me. Thou hast, by the temporal blessings which I bestowed on thee, provided for the idols, ornaments, shrines, and sacrifices *; therefore thou shalt be justly ejected from the land which I gave thee for an inheritance.

9. And thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst send thy messengers far off, and didst debase thyself even unto hell.

10. Thou art wearied in the greatness of thy way; yet saidst thou not, There is no hope; thou hast found the life of thine hand, therefore thou wast not grieved.

11. And of whom hast thou been afraid or feared, that thou hast lyed, and hast not remembered me, nor laid it to thy heart? Have not I held my peace, even of old, and thou fearest me not.

9, 10. Further, thou hast rejected me, by having no faith in my promise, nor confidence in my protection; for in times of impending danger, thou hast visited some heathen king with a present of oil †, and a quantity of precious ointments, to procure his support, rather than rely on me. Thou hast sent thine ambassadors to distant countries, to negotiate a treaty, and hast submitted to the most humiliating conditions, even to the acceptance of their idolatries ‡, in order to conciliate their favour. Sometimes thou hast wearied thyself, by the length of the journies undertaken, and the various arts used, to negotiate a treaty, and after all, the negotiation has proved unsuccessful. Yet even then thou didst not say, "There is no hope of protection from this manner of applying to heathens; it is better to rely on the Lord:" No, but because at other times, the negotiation succeeded, and thou hast found a temporary relief, thou hast not ceased to follow the same sinful plan.

11, 12, 13, 14. Is the danger to which thou wast exposed, an apology for thy conduct? Surely not. Who is man of whom thou hast been so anxiously afraid, when compared with me? Is it reasonable, that the fear of man should induce thee to deal falsely in my covenant, by casting away thy confidence in my protection; that thou

* Hosea ii. 8.

† "That is, the king of Assyria or Egypt. Hosea reproacheth the Israelites for the same practice. "They make a covenant with Assyria, and oil is carried to Egypt," Hof. xii. 1. It is well known, that in all parts of the East, whoever visits a great person, must carry him a present. "It is counted uncivil, (says Maundrell, p. 26.) to visit in this country, without an offering in hand. All great men expect it as a tribute, due to

their character and authority; and look upon themselves as affronted, and indeed defrauded, when the compliment is omitted." Lowth's Translation of Isaiah.

‡ Alanassih ordered the altar made by Solomon to be removed from before the temple, and another to be placed there, in imitation of an altar he had seen at Damascus, when he was negotiating a treaty with the king of Syria.

shouldest not remember me, who am the Almighty; nor revolve in thy mind the manifestations of my power, in thy former deliverances? Is it not because I delayed, for a long time, to inflict punishment for thy unbelief, that thou hast persevered in the same line of conduct, thus casting off my fear. But now I will manifest my * righteousness in thy punishment, and thy arts and efforts shall not avail, to preserve thee from it. When thou prayest fervently unto me, I will not hear thee; let the people with whom thou hast made a treaty, and on whom thou hast relied more than on me, deliver thee; but neither shall their efforts avail. They shall be dispersed as chaff by the wind, or stubble by the whirlwind.

But such of the nation as put their trust in me, shall be at length restored to inherit the land, and to enjoy the privileges of my church. As a king, meditating an important expedition, issues a mandate to pioneers, to make the way for his army, and remove obstructions out of it; so at the period appointed for thy restoration, I, saith JEHOVAH, will prepare the way for it; I will remove, by my grace, and by my providence, every obstruction to the restoration of those whom I acknowledge for my people.

15, 16. For thus saith JEHOVAH, At that time, ye, as my people, shall apprehend my perfections more clearly, and worship me in a manner more suitable to my nature. Ye shall know that I am the self-existent, high, by my perfections, above the praises; lofty, by my station as supreme Ruler, entitled to the services of my creatures; enjoying happiness from eternity, before men or angels existed: That my nature is infinitely holy, so that I can have no pleasure in the services of sinners: That my residence is in heaven, that place whose loftiness and holiness is suited to my nature and government; and therefore I dwell not in temples built by human art. Yet I dwell, by my Spirit, in the hearts of my people, and these are they, who are contrite from a conviction of their sins, and humble, from a sense of their own un-

12. I will declare thy righteousness, and thy works; for they shall not profit thee.

13. When thou cryest, let thy companions deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in me, shall possess the land, and shall inherit my holy mountain.

14. And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people.

15. For thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the hearts of the contrite ones.

* This translation is warranted by the Syriac, Septuagint, and Arabic versions.

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16. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the Spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

17. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly, in the way of his heart.

18. I have seen his ways, and will heal him; I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him, and to his mourners.

19. I create the fruit of the lips; peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and I will heal him.

20. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt.

21. There is no

worthiness. On such, by dwelling in them, I will bestow a spiritual life, so as to quicken the humble in my service, and comfort the contrite in their godly sorrow. For I will shew paternal affection and forbearance to my people, suitable to their frailty; I will not chasten in proportion to their sins, nor continue the effects of my anger, as their obstinacy merits*, lest my wrath should end in their destruction; and thus I should receive no glory, from the work of my hands.

17, 18. Because of Israel's iniquity I was wroth with him for a short time†, (when compared with the duration of my love); I chastened him, and withdrew my countenance and instruction, in my anger, from him. Instead of profiting by correction, so as to return to his duty, he departed further from the way of my commandments, following the retrograde course of his own evil heart. I have observed his ways, for which, in justice, I might eternally reject him; but to manifest my mercy, I will heal his spiritual maladies, and will be his guide, in the way of eternal salvation. I will restore comforts, spiritual and temporal, to him, and to those who mourn over the wretchedness of his condition.

19. Doubt not this manifestation of mercy to Israel; for at the period of his restoration, I will bestow, by the ministry of the gospel, peace, spiritual and eternal, peace with God and man, not only on him, who was formerly a nation near me, but likewise on heathen nations, who were long and much alienated from me. I will therefore heal his spiritual maladies.

20, 21. But the wicked who resist the gospel, being influenced by their passions, discover the vileness and impurity of their hearts; as the waters of the sea, agitated by the storm, work up filth and mire from the bottom. Such wicked

* See Psal. vii. 38, 39. Psal. ciii. 9. 13, 14.

† The word translated "covetousness," should be translated "a short time," so the Septuagint has it. This translation is more consonant to the sense of the passage. Several sins are mentioned above, as the cause

of Israel's rejection; therefore covetousness could not properly be called here the only one. And "a short time," as the period of God's anger, agrees exactly with chap. liv. 8. "In a short wrath I hid my face for a moment from thee."

persons shall not enjoy peace, here or hereafter, peace, saith my God, faith my God. to the wicked.

CHAPTER LVIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet proceeds to shew the sins of the Jewish people, which occasioned the rejection and dispersion of the nation. He gives a view of the sins with which they were chargeable, betwixt their return from Babylon, and their dispersion by the Romans. (See Argument to chap. lvii.)

They are charged here chiefly with hypocrisy, and this seems to have been the characteristic sin of the Jews, after their return from Babylon. They had renounced gross outward idolatry, and were exceedingly zealous in observing the rules and ceremonies enjoined by the law of Moses; while they reconciled this zeal, with the practice of the most enormous crimes. This appears evident from the exhortations of the prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, in their times; and from the address of our Saviour to the Pharisees, in his time. God commissions the prophet to declare to the people their sin, publicly and powerfully, ver. 1.; he shews their zeal in attending the outward ordinances of religion, ver. 2.; points out the defects of their services, which proved their hypocrisy, ver. 3, 4, 5.; mentions what God requires as evidences of sincerity in serving him; ver. 6, 7.; promises to the sincere, mingled with evidences of sincerity, ver. 8,---11.; a promise that the Jews shall return in the latter days, ver. 12.; directions and promises respecting the use of gospel ordinances, typified by the Sabbath, ver. 13, 14.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. In order to shew further the justice of God in rejecting the Jewish nation, he commissioned me thus: Proclaim publicly, urge powerfully, on the consciences of my people, their transgression. With all the solicitude of a watchman, who gives warning of impending danger, by sound of trumpet, make known to the descendents of Jacob, the sins that will occasion my rejecting them.

THE TEXT.

1. Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.

2. Yet daily, and know my nation thine-ness, not the their God of me th of justice delight in to God.

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2. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinances of their God; they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.

3. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? Wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast, ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.

4. Behold ye fast for strife, and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness, ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high.

2. The great sin with which they are chargeable is hypocrisy. They are indeed constant in their devotional exercises, and diligent in attending the ordinances of my institution; they appear, as a nation, to respect morals, and to reverence the national religion enjoined by their God; they are solicitous to know what I have decreed concerning morals and religion, and to appearance take delight in maintaining intercourse with me*.

3. Yet their insincerity in these services is obvious, because they boast of them, saying, We have fasted, we have afflicted our souls. They harbour unkind thoughts of me, in believing that I am less faithful in fulfilling my promises, than they are in performing their services; saying, "Thou seest not, thou dost not regard." How evident is your hypocrisy! Though fasting was enjoined as a restraint upon the sensual appetites, in the day of your fasting ye enjoy your sensual pleasures; and ye consider all your religious services, as laying me under an obligation of debt to you, so that ye rigorously demand the price of your labour.

4. How obvious is your hypocrisy! seeing your disposition and conduct are not rectified by the services you perform. Fasting is intended to humble the soul, and a humble soul is disposed to meekness and love; but on the contrary, at the very time ye fast, ye discover a contentious disposition, striving with your brethren about the time or mode of performing the duty; and ye shew an unmerciful conduct, by oppressing the poor to the utmost. These things prove, that ye perform your religious services, merely to procure the applause of men. Can ye therefore seriously believe,

* The character here given of the Jews, shews what lengths men may go in a profession of religion, without sincerity; having a form of godliness, while they are strangers to the power of it. They may be constant in devotion, like the Pharisees, who, rather than let the hour of prayer pass, "prayed standing in the corners of the streets." So diligent in attending ordinances, that no fast or festival escapes unobserved. So decent in their general deportment, that like the apostle Paul, when a Pharisee, they may

be, "touching the righteousness of the law, blameless," Phil. iii. 7. So respectful to the religion of their country, as to speak for it, fight for it, bestow of their substance to support it. So inquisitive after orthodoxy, that they may read much to discover it, and write much to defend it. So spiritual in their devotional exercises, that their affections are engaged in them. like the stony ground hearers, who received the word with joy, or the hearers of John the Baptist, who rejoiced in his light for a season.

that such a manner of fasting or performing any other religious duty, was enjoined by, or is acceptable to me?

5. Is it such a fast as you observe, that I have enjoined, that a man should afflict his soul for a day, like the bulrush which bows its head in a gale, but when the gale ceases to blow, rears it again? Have I not enjoined a fast, for the purpose of working a lasting reformation on the heart and conduct? Shall the mere bodily exercise of a person, in spreading sackcloth and ashes for his couch, be acceptable to JEHOVAH, who is a spirit, and must be worshipped in spirit and in truth *?

6. Is not this the fast which is agreeable to me, that men attain the end for which I enjoined the duty? namely, to subdue their corrupt nature, and to learn the practice of righteousness and mercy; particularly that ye should remove the love of sin from the heart; that ye do not rigorously exact your debts; that ye permit your servants to go out free in the year of release; and that ye lay aside every species of oppression?

7. Is not a fast designed likewise, to teach you the practice of mercy; a humble sense of your own sins, will lead you to see, that sin is the procuring cause of every misery, and consequently induce you to feel for, and relieve the miseries of others. To distribute of thy bread to the hungry, to lodge the wandering poor in thy house, to clothe the naked wherever thou see'st them; and not to avoid the sight of another's distress, lest thy heart should be affected by it; remembering that the wretched are thy brethren, that thou art a partaker of the same nature with them, and therefore liable to the same distress.

* God's reproof of the hypocrites here, shews what are the defects of the hypocrites religious services. They are these: 1. Boasting of their services, like the Pharisee, "I fast twice a-week." 2. Harbours unkind thoughts of God, like the slothful servant, "I knew that thou art an austere man." 3. Reconciling the gratification of their lusts with their services, perhaps consider the one as an atonement for the other, like the harlot, "I have paid my vows, let us take our fill of love unto the morning." 4. Resting

on the merit of their services, though our Lord says, "When ye have done your utmost, say, We are unprofitable servants." And the apostle, "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." 5. Their services have no sanctifying influence upon them. 6. They have no lasting effect. 7. The hypocrite is satisfied with the outward performance of duty, while the spirit is not engaged in it.

5. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

6. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

7. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou see'st the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

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8. Then shall thy
light break forth as the
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speedily; and thy right-
eousness shall go be-
fore thee, the glory of
the Lord shall be thy
reward.

9. Then shalt thou
call, and the Lord shall
answer; thou shalt cry,
and he shall say, Here
I am, if thou take a-
way from the midst of
thee the yoke, the put-
ting forth of the fin-
ger, and speaking va-
nity.

10. And if thou draw
out thy soul to the
hungry, and satisfy the
afflicted soul, then shall
thy light rise in obscu-
rity, and thy darkness
as the noon-day.

11. And the Lord
shall guide thee con-
tinually, and satisfy thy
soul in drought, and
make fat thy bones;
and thou shalt be like
a well-watered garden, and
as a spring of water,
whose waters fail not.

8. Then, when thou attainest the end of the ordinances I have appointed, thy knowledge of me, and consolation in me, shall be great and progressive, like the light of the morning, and thy spiritual maladies shall be healed; thy righteousness shall be conspicuous, acknowledged by all, and the presence of JEHOVAH shall eminently, and upon all occasions defend thee.

9. Then thou shalt pray to JEHOVAH in the boldness of faith, and he shall grant thy petitions. Thou shalt have recourse to him in every trying circumstance, and he will manifest himself near to thee, knowing thy situation, and affording thee deliverance. These promises shall be accomplished to thee, when thou shalt remove from the midst of thee, as a nation, every species of oppression, of insolent mockery, as well as flattery and falsehood; in conversing with one another.

10. When, from a principle of compassion, thou bestowest of thy bread to feed the hungry, and affordest relief to the afflicted, whatever be the nature of his distress: then shall deliverance, and the consolations consequent upon it, be given thee; unexpectedly, as light rising out of obscurity; eminently and effectually, as when midnight darkness is changed to the blaze of noon-day.

11. As JEHOVAH conducted thy fathers through the wilderness, by a pillar of cloud and of fire, so he shall lead thee continually through this life, by his grace, and protect thee by his providence; as he nourished thy fathers with manna from heaven, and water from the rock, he shall abundantly satisfy thy soul, with the righteousness of the Messiah, and with the consolations of his Spirit, sufficient to preserve thee in the severest trials. He will bestow his grace according to thy need, making it sufficient for thee to perform duty, and to sustain difficulty. As a well-watered garden produces fruit abundantly; so, through his grace plentifully bestowed, thou shalt abound in those works of righteousness, that are by Christ Jesus, to the praise and glory of God. And as the waters of a copious spring never fail, so the sanctifying and comforting influences of God's Spirit,

shall not cease to operate in thee here, until they lead thee to eternal happiness hereafter.

12. And thy offspring, at a future period, shall build the cities that were a long time in ruins, and raise up palaces on the foundations that were covered with rubbish for generations. Thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, by rebuilding the city of Jerusalem, and The restorer of a desert land, by filling Judea with inhabitants.

13. If thou avoideest the profanation of my ordinances by hypocrisy, not reconciling the gratification of thy own irregular passions, with the observation of my ordinances; if thou shalt reckon my ordinances delightful; if thou shalt reverence them as of divine institution, and shalt esteem it thy honour to wait on JEHOVAH in them; if thou wilt prove thy respect for them, by carefully avoiding sin, in heart, speech, and behaviour:

14. Then shall thy delight in JEHOVAH be real and not feigned; and I will exalt thee, by clearer manifestations of my presence, above the other nations of the earth; and I will bestow on thee temporal blessings, in the land promised to thy fathers, and possessed as an inheritance by the descendants of Jacob. Fear not the accomplishment of this promise; for JEHOVAH, who deceiveth not, and cannot be deceived, hath spoken it.

12. And they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.

13. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him; not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words:

14. Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: if the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

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CHAPTER LIX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE prophet continues to vindicate the dealings of God with the Jewish nation, in rejecting and dispersing them. In order to that, he shews the sins with which they are chargeable, at, and after their dispersion by the Romans. (See argument to chap. lvii. and lviii.)

He refutes their erroneous sentiments concerning God's dealings, ver. 1.; shews the true cause of their calamities, to be, in general, sins, ver. 2.; mentions the several sins, with their aggravations, of which they were guilty, from the period of crucifying the Messiah downward, ver. 3,—8. He next introduces the people confessing their sins, and the justice of God's dealings, ver. 9,—15. Whoever will attend to God's charge, and the peoples confession, will see a very true, but a very shocking picture of the Jews, from the period in which our Saviour appeared among them, to the present times.

God is introduced, as able and willing to deliver them from their calamitous condition, ver. 16,—18.; he promises to extend the gospel throughout the world, ver. 19.; to convert the Jews, ver. 20.; for so the passage is interpreted by the apostle Paul, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

He promises the continuance of his Spirit, and his ordinances with the Jewish nation, to the end of time, ver. 21.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear.

1. How astonishing, O ye Jews, is your blindness, respecting the dealings of God with your nation, and the causes of them! When ye are long ejected from your land, and the privileges of his people, and find your prayers unavailing to restore you to his favour; ye imagine, that God is not able to deliver you, or that he has no compassion for you.

Know ye, that he is JEHOVAH, the Almighty, whose power is as great now, as when he manifested it, in the deliverances afforded your nation on

former occasions ; the unchangeable God, whose love is equally ready now, as formerly, to answer the prayers that are offered up to him in sincerity.

2. But your iniquities first made, and still continue a separation between you and your God ; your sins are the cause that he does not admit you to his presence, nor give a favourable answer to your prayers.

3, 4. For your hands are polluted with the blood of the Messiah, which ye have shed ; your fingers are guilty of the murder of his servants, whom ye have killed ; your lips speak falsehood, in blaspheming him ; and your tongue muttereth wickedness, in execrations against him. Your ignorance is no apology, because no one preferreth his suit to God in sincerity, for counsel ; nor doth any one plead fervently for a knowledge of the truth. Yet trust, for your acceptance with God, to what cannot avail you ; your descent from Abraham *, or the merit of your works †. Ye proclaim this false doctrine to others, while ye contrive plans for resisting the doctrine revealed by the Messiah ; and execute these plans, so oft as ye have an opportunity.

5. Thus said JEHOVAH to me, With the cruelty of those who would hatch the eggs of the cockatrice, to multiply the brood, and spread destruction, they bring to maturity, and execute the schemes of the grand adversary, against the Messiah and his kingdom, to destroy souls. With the cunning and fierceness of the spider, who weaves webs, to catch flies as his prey, they form arguments against the Messiah and his doctrine, to entangle souls for their ruin. He that joins with them in carrying on their schemes, shall perish eternally ; and when the scheme of Satan's suggestion is brought to maturity, and executed, multitudes are destroyed ; just as when the egg of a basilisk is hatched, it produces a fiery flying serpent, spreading its poison rapidly and extensively.

2. But your iniquities have separated between you, and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you.

3. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity ; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

4. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth ; they trust in vanity, and speak lies ; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity.

5. They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web ; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed, breaketh out into a viper.

* " Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to be our father," Mat. iii. 9.

† " Going about to establish their own righteousness," Rom. x. 3.

6. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands.

7. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; waiting and destruction are in their paths.

8. The way of peace they know not, and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein, shall not know peace.

9. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us; we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness.

6. Their doctrine of justification by works, may be fitly compared to the spider's web; too thin and feeble, as a garment, it is unfit to cover nakedness, or occasion warmth; neither shall they be justified by their works: for when tried by the rule of God's law, especially as to the motives from which they proceed, they are wicked works; yea they are guilty of fraud and injustice in their conduct, at the very time they expect to be justified by their merit.

7, 8. They are prone to insurrection, and they are ready to shed innocent blood*. The tendency of their devices is, to contrive injuries; and the fruit of their conduct is, to procure calamity or destruction to themselves and others. They know not how to maintain peace with God or man; there is no rationality in their conduct; it is so very perverse, that whoever has any dealings with them, must be a stranger to peace and happiness.

9. But in the latter days, they shall be made sensible of their sins, and shall acknowledge the justice of God's dealings with them, saying, On account of our sins, the dispensation that would deliver us, is far distant from us; and the interposition which God owes to his justice, does not overtake us. We look for a knowledge of the truth, but how astonishing is our ignorance! we expect the brightness of the Messiah's appearance, but we continue in error concerning him.

* The frequent insurrections of the Jews, in the reigns of Trajan and Adrian, and the incredible slaughter of the Romans, as well as of themselves, in these insurrections, are related by Dion, Orosius, and Eusebius. Dion relates, that in the reign of Trajan, the Jews about Cyrene slew of the Romans and Greeks, two hundred and twenty thousand men. In Egypt also, and in Cyprus, there perished by their means, two hundred and forty thousand men more. Dion. hist. lib. 68. p. 786. Orosius, treating of the same time, saith, "That the Jews, with an incredible commotion, made wild, as it were, with rage, rose at once in different

parts of the earth. For throughout all Syria, they waged the fiercest wars against the inhabitants; and the country was almost desolated. Egypt also, and Cyrene, and Thibars, they disturbed with cruel seditions. Oros. hist. lib. 7. cap. 12. In the reign of Adrian, was there great rebellion, under their false messiah, Bariochibas, in which five hundred and eighty thousand Jews were slain by the sword; and the loss of the Romans in subduing them, was so great, that the emperor forbore the usual salutations, in his letters to the senate. Euf. hist. lib. 4. cap. 6.

10. So great is our judicial ignorance, that we cannot, by all our researches, discern the truth, notwithstanding it is clearly revealed; resembling the blind, who grope for the wall that is near them, without being able to find it; or like those deprived of sight, who wander* from the way that lies plain before them.

We are offended with the truth, as persons stumble in the twilight, though the truth is supported by evidence, clear as the light of noon-day. We relish not the delightful blessings offered in the gospel, as dead men cannot partake of the delicacies† that surround them.

11, 12. Therefore, though we mourn for our sins, with the vehement groaning of bears, or the continued moan of doves; the dispensation for which we look to deliver us, doth not come; and the salvation promised us, is far distant from us. For our transgressions are many and heinously aggravated before thee; our sins condemn us, and justify thy dealings; for now we are sensible of our transgressions, and our sins we freely confess:

13. Particularly our great national sin, *rejecting the Messiah*, which includes in it these aggravating circumstances: Rebellion against JEHOVAH, commanding us to submit to him; perverting the testimony of the prophets concerning him; revolting from the God of our fathers, no longer acknowledging him to be our God; blaspheming the holy and righteous One; contriving and uttering falsehoods, in order to maintain this revolt of our nation from God, throughout our generations.

14, 15. We confess that law is perverted; and that justice is violated; that truth is banished from our conversation, and integrity from our dealings. The belief and knowledge of revealed truth is entirely lost; and the person who departs from the national creed, exposeth himself to be

10. We grope for the wall, like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon-day, as in the night; we are in desolate places, as dead men.

11. We roar all like bears, and mourn fore like doves; we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far off from us.

12. For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them.

13. In transgressing and lying against the Lord, and departing away from our God; speaking oppression and revolt; conceiving, and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.

14. And judgment is turned away backward; and justice standeth afar off; for truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter.

* See Lowth's Translation of Isaiah, *ad locum*.

† The original word signifies desolations, or delicacies; the latter must be intended

here, because the prophet introduces the people confessing the advantages they abused.

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15. Yea, truth fail-eth; and he that departeth from evil, maketh himself a prey; and the Lord saw it, and it displeased him, that there was no judgment.

16. And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor; therefore his arm brought salvation unto him, and his righteousness, it sustained him.

17. For he put on righteousness as a breast-plate; and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak.

18. According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay, fury to his adversaries, recompense to his enemies; to the islands he will repay recompense.

19. So shall they fear the name of the

deprived of privileges, and plundered of his effects, by his brethren. Our conduct was obvious to JEHOVAH, as the Omniscient; our defect of religion and morality was offensive to him, as the true and holy God.

16, 17. JEHOVAH saw, that no human device or effort could deliver the Jewish nation from their sins, or their calamities; what is yet more astonishing, that none of them seriously and fervently interceded with him to interpose. Yet he wrought deliverance for them by his own power, in order to manifest his righteousness, revealed through the Messiah, as the procuring cause of their salvation. In delivering them, and in punishing their enemies, JEHOVAH displayed his own perfections; he appeared arrayed as a warrior, clothed in armour for the battle. The righteousness of the Messiah, his own contrivance, prevented him from being offended by their provoking sins; as a breast-plate defends the vitals of the warrior, from the darts of his enemies; the certain expectation of extending, by their deliverance to lost mankind, the eternal salvation purchased by the Messiah, so glorious to him, so beneficial to his church, was like the helmet placed on the warrior's head for ornament and defence. Justice, which induced him to punish the oppressions of their enemies; zeal, which prompted him to be faithful in fulfilling the promises made to their fathers, were like the coat of mail which makes the warrior a terror to his enemies, and a protector to his friends.

18, 19. He who is mighty * by his own perfections, to recompense foes and friends, shall make known his wrath against his adversaries, by his word; he shall inflict punishment on obstinate enemies, by his Providence. He shall extend the declarations of his word, and the dispensations of his Providence, to the remotest regions of the earth. On the other hand, he shall bestow his grace extensively, and powerfully, on those whom

* See Lowth's Translation, where he supposes the word בעל to be בעד, that is, "Lord of recompenses." This is more intel-

ligible than our translation, and more suitable to the prophet's scope.

he hath ordained to salvation; so that they who inhabit the west, shall revere the name of JEHOVAH; and they who dwell in the east, shall know and acknowledge the Messiah to be his glory. However great the opposition of his enemies, though it seem irresistible, like an overflowing flood, it shall be resisted, and overcome, by the influences of his Spirit.

20, 21. At that time, "when the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in" to the kingdom of the Messiah, the Redeemer shall come to the Jewish nation, for their conversion and salvation*. He shall take away the guilt of their sins, who are the descendents of Jacob, by the application of his righteousness; and shall turn them from their infidelity and other sins, to submit to himself, by the influences of his Spirit; for this is the nature of the covenant of grace which I shall then make with them, saith JEHOVAH. My Spirit, which shall be given thee as a nation, at thy conversion, and the saving knowledge of my words, which I will then bestow upon thee, shall not be taken away from thee as a nation, throughout the successive generations that follow, from the period of thy conversion, till the end of time. Of this thou mayest be assured, because JEHOVAH hath spoken it.

Lord, from the west, and his glory from the rising of the sun: when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.

20. And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the Lord.

21. As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seeds seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.

* See Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27.

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CHAPTER LX.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter carries on the series of events, from the close of the preceding. The last verses of the preceding, shew the conversion and restoration of the Jews: This describes the glory of the church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, during the millennium, which follows immediately after that event.

Though some of the most beautiful features of the portraiture drawn here, may belong to the Jewish state and polity, yet, in regard they constitute a part of the church of Christ, at the period to which the prophecy points; that on their model the churches of the Gentiles are formed; and that in Christ Jesus, there is neither circumcision or uncircumcision, barbarian or Scythian, bond or free, it is, with all propriety, offered as a picture of the universal church, consisting of Jews and Gentiles. The happiness and honour of the church from God's presence, is described, ver. 1.; contrasted with the misery of her enemies, ver. 2.; the increase of her numbers, ver. 3, 4, 5.; of her wealth and outward prosperity, ver. 6, 7.; the cause of her increase, ver. 8,---12.; the stability and glory of her polity, that is, of her government and ordinances, ver. 13,---17.; her spiritual happiness, arising from her improvement in morals and religion, ver. 18,---21.; a declaration concerning the fulfilment of these promises, ver. 22.

THE TEXT.

1. Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. O thou that art the true church, entered into a marriage covenant with the Messiah *, God hath commanded with authority, Thou shalt arise from a state of oppression and subjection, to freedom and dominion †. Thou shalt be enlightened with the knowledge, arrayed with the righteousness of the Messiah, and adorned with the graces of his Spirit; for the promised period of superior knowledge and superior holiness is come. The glorious presence of JEHOVAH shall be given thee,

* "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," Rev. xix.

Dan. vii. The dominion under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, Dan. vii.

† The saints shall take the kingdom,

in all the ordinances of his institution, arising on thee as the Sun of righteousness, with salvation in his rays.

2. Mark the astonishing difference betwixt thee and the earthly-minded, the nations that are yet strangers to God and the Messiah, they are overwhelmed with ignorance and its attendant miseries*; but JEHOVAH's promise is bestowed on thee, and thy happiness, through the manifestations of his glorious presence, is conspicuous.

3. The knowledge and happiness bestowed on thee, shall induce nations, who were formerly strangers to God, to embrace the same faith with thee, even kings shall esteem it their honour to walk by the same rule with thee.

4. Direct thy attention to the several corners of the earth: thou shalt find, that multitudes in all these countries shall join thy society; some, much alienated† through ignorance and sin, shall submit to thy authority, as children to their mother; others, born within thy pale, and accustomed to thine ordinances from their infancy, shall seek and receive their spiritual nourishment from thee.

5. The numerous converts who join thy society, shall cause thy heart to overflow with joy; thou shalt fear at first that thy happiness is not real; thou shalt then be agitated by the view of so glorious and unexpected an event; at length thy heart shall be enlarged to love and to praise God for the happiness bestowed. Thou shalt feel like the merchant, when the riches of the sea are poured in upon him; or like the king, when the forces of the nations submit to him.

6. All the commodities of the several countries, whether their native produce or acquired by commerce, shall no longer be prostituted to the gratification of mens irregular passions, but shall be consecrated to my glory, and for thy service.

* "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty," Psal. lxxiv. 20. "Being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts, who being past feeling, have given

themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," Eph. i. 19.

† Luke xv. He went to a far country signifies alienation of heart and conduct.

2. For, behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

3. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

4. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see, all they gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side.

5. Then thou shalt see and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentile shall come unto thee.

6. The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Media and Ephah; and they from Sheba shall come, they shall bring gold and incense; and

7. Kedars shall come to thee, and the rams of the flock shall be with thee; up with mine arm, and glorify in glory.

8. That fly as the window

9. Shall we the first, to from them, of the and to Israel, glorified

10. A stranger up thy kings to thee wrath

they shall shew forth the praises of the Lord.

Such as the merchandise carried on the multitude of camels, employed by the caravans, as well as that carried by the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; yea all the gold and frankincense of Sheba, shall the owners cheerfully dedicate to thy service, and shall joyfully proclaim the praises of JEHOVAH.

7. All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee, the rams of Nebaioth shall minister unto thee; they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar, and I will glorify the house of my glory.

7. The choicest of the Arabian flocks, as those of Kedar and Nebaioth, shall be used according to thy direction, and for thy advantage, which will be equally acceptable to me, as when they were offered in sacrifice upon my altar; and I will adorn, with outward prosperity, the church, my spiritual temple, already beautiful with every spiritual grace and virtue.

8. Who are these that fly as a cloud, and as the doves to their windows?

8. Multitudes eagerly join thy society, they are spread over all the earth, as a cloud covers the face of the sky; they are animated by zeal and knowledge, in joining thee, like doves that swiftly, yet directly, wing their way to the windows of the dove-cote.

9. Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far, their silver and their gold with them, unto the name of the Lord thy God, and to the Holy One of Israel, because he hath glorified thee.

9. Dost thou enquire how so many converts are made? Be assured that my grace is sufficient, and shall be employed to convert the inhabitants of the most distant coasts. I will excite nations, famous for their shipping, to send the knowledge of the truth to distant countries, as the mean of begetting spiritual children to thee: this shall be their primary object, even before the advantages of commerce; and instead of robbing the inhabitants of these countries of their wealth, according to the practice of former ages, they shall introduce a knowledge of the useful arts, by which their wealth and outward prosperity shall be increased. This shall be accomplished to manifest the perfections of JEHOVAH, who is thy God in covenant; of the holy One of Israel, who hath promised to honour thee.

10. And the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee; for in my wrath I smote thee,

10. The descendents of those nations who were strangers to me the true God, and to my revealed will, shall powerfully support the doctrine of salvation through the Messiah*, which constitutes thy strength; and the governments of these na-

* See verse 8.

tions shall afford protection to thee, and sustenance to thy office-bearers *; for though I chastened thee in former ages, being justly offended with thy sinful attachment to the present world; yet, now being purified from that attachment, and restored to my favour, I will shew a most tender affection for thee, in causing the people and the rulers of the world to serve thee.

11. As the gates of the cities of refuge were open day and night, to receive the man-slayer; so thou, under the influence of the Messiah's love, shall receive readily and at all times, sinners who seek a refuge in thee; while nations and their rulers, animated by faith, shall continually flow in to thy society.

12. They shall be induced by fear, likewise, to associate themselves with thee; for every nation and kingdom that will not receive thy doctrine, and submit to thy government, shall, according to my word, perish eternally, and shall, in the course of my providence, be scourged and laid waste.

13. If I made the material temple a beautiful and solid building, by the goodness of the materials, and the exquisiteness of the workmanship, how much more shall my power and wisdom form a government and ordinances to thee, which shall make thee beautiful and stable as a society! I will certainly adorn thee, as being the society on which my special presence is bestowed on earth; I will surely honour thee, as being like the footstool to the throne, nearest in dignity to the society among whom I reside in heaven.

14. The honour conferred on thee shall be conspicuous, in regard the descendants of those who oppressed thee, shall humbly seek the privileges of communion with thee; and all that scornfully rejected thy admonitions, shall willingly submit to thy authority. For they shall esteem thee, the society among whom JEHOVAH, resides, the true church of the holy One of Israel.

15. Instead of being avoided and hated as in former ages, so that few were willing to associate

but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.

11. Therefore thy gates shall be open continually, they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought.

12. For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.

13. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious.

14. The sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee, shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and

* "They ministered to him of their substance."

hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.

15. Thou shalt also suck the milk of the Gentiles, and shalt suck the breast of kings, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the mighty One of Jacob.

17. For brass, I will bring gold, and for iron, I will bring silver, and for wood, brass, and for stones, iron: I will also make thy officers, peace, and thine exactors, righteousness.

18. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls salvation, and thy gates praise.

19. The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for

themselves with thee, I will instruct men by my grace, to consider union with thee, and interest in thy privileges, as the sources of their highest honour, the means of their greatest happiness; and thou shalt continue to be thus revered, while the earth remains.

16. The temporal blessings of the nations, shall be consecrated to thy service; the authority of their governments shall protect and nourish thee, with the same tender care that a nurse suckles and fosters a child, and by the enjoyment of these advantages, thou shalt be convinced that I, thy Saviour, am the only true God, and that I, thy Redeemer, am faithful, and able to fulfil the promises made to the house of Jacob*.

17. If in the material temple, gold occupied the place of brass, silver that of iron, brass that of wood, and iron that of stone, every part of the building would be more solid, and the whole more glorious than at present; now I will regulate every circumstance respecting thy government and ordinances, from the most momentous to the most minute, with perfect wisdom; and will form for thee a polity, on the whole excelling that of every former period, as much as the precious excel the baser metals, and the baser metals excel wood and stone; I will cause all thy rulers to promote peace, and make their exactors act righteously, each being intent, not on his private gain, but on the public good.

18. Encroachment on another's right, shall not be heard among the members of thy community; destruction, and the other calamities consequent upon war, shall not take place among those who submit to thy authority. The knowledge of eternal salvation, communicated by thee, shall prove thy defence from private and from public injuries; thy readiness to receive into thy bosom returning sinners, shall remove enmity, fill the hearts of mankind with mutual love, and excite them to offer mutual praise.

19. The favour of the supreme rulers of this world shall no longer be the source of thy hap-

* "To them were committed the oracles of God," Rom. iii. 2.

pinefs, neither fhall the protection of the fubordinate magiftrates be the caufe of thy deliverance and defence*; for the favour of JEHOVAH fhall afford thee the foretafte of that happinefs, which fhall never end: the prefence of thy God fhall be thy boaft here, and thy hope of glory hereafter.

20. The happinefs and protection beftowed on thee, fhall not henceforth be fubject to change, like the favour and protection of the princes of this world, or the light of the natural fun and moon; for the one fets, and the other wanes: but the favour of JEHOVAH fhall never be withdrawn from thee; it fhall continue with thee while the earth remains, and after it is diffolved, throughout the endlefs ages of eternity. His protection fhall not ceafe to defend thee, fo that thou fhalt not experience diftreffes fimilar to thofe which occafioned thy mourning in former ages.

21. All the members of thy community fhall be righteous, they fhall continue to poffefs the earth while it remains, for they are united to the Mefiah by faith, as a cion ingrafted, by my power, into a good flock, they are converted and fanctified by my Spirit, that I may be glorified by their conduct.

22. The members of the church, though few in number now, fhall hereafter be increafed a thoufand to one. The church, though for the prefent feeble as a fociety, compared with the kingdoms of the world, fhall, at the promifed period, be a powerful community: I, JEHOVAH, fhall effect this change, by my power, at the period appointed in my eternal counfels.

* The expreffions do not imply, that the favour of the rulers fhould be withheld from the church, the contrary is asserted ver. 11.

and 16. but that it fhall not be her *only* nor her *chief* fupport.

brightnefs fhall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord fhall be thine everlafting light, and thy God thy glory.

20. Thy fun fhall no more go down; neither fhall thy moon withdraw itfelf, for the Lord fhall be thine everlafting light, and the days of thy mourning fhall be ended.

21. Thy people alfo fhall be all righteous, they fhall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.

22. A little one fhall become a thoufand, and a fmall one a ftrong nation. I, the Lord, will haften it in his time.

Fifth PARALLEL VIEW of the Gospel Times, extending to the close of the lxivth Chapter:

CHAPTER LXI.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN the first three verses is described the personal ministry of the Messiah, shewing the end of his coming into the world, or the design of the gospel published by him. The application of this passage, by our Saviour to himself, Luke iv. ascertains the true interpretation to every Christian. The spirit of prophecy foretels, ver. 4. the restoration of the Jews to the promised land, in the latter days; intimating, however, that a long period of time should intervene, betwixt the personal ministry of the Messiah, and that event.

He next describes the spiritual disposition of the restored Jews, ver. 5, 6.; their happiness, temporal and spiritual, ver. 7, 8.; the honour they shall receive from the other nations, ver. 9.

The two last verses are a hymn of praise sung by the restored Jews, in which they mention the sources from which these advantages flow, namely, their being invested with the righteousness of the Messiah, and sanctified by the influences of his Spirit.

THE TEXT.

1. The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus saith the Messiah, The Spirit of JEHOVAH is bestowed on me beyond measure, in order to qualify me for the office of mediator betwixt God and man, to which I was appointed by JEHOVAH, in his eternal counsels. He hath now sent me into the world, to publish the glad tidings of peace with God, and eternal happiness to all who receive my testimony, and submit to my righteousness; to heal those who are contrite in heart, from a conviction of sin, with the hope of pardon; to set free from the power of sin, such as are slaves to their own lusts; to introduce to the light and liberty of the children of God, those who are blinded by the delusions of Satan, and led captive by him at his will:

2. To offer in the most public manner, those blessings that were typified by the privileges of the year of jubilee, a year so beneficial to the wretched, so acceptable to JEHOVAH; for as the sound of the jubilee trumpet intimated a discharge to the insolvent debtor, freedom to the miserable slave, and the possession of his inheritance to him who had sold it; so, by the ministry of the word, I offer a discharge of the debt of sin, freedom from the tyranny of Satan, and the possession of the eternal inheritance, forfeited by man's apostacy.

He hath sent me to execute the vengeance threatened against the enemy of mankind*, by him who is our God in covenant, even to destroy the works of the devil †, and to comfort all those who mourn after a godly manner.

3. As the mourner on a festival day changes his whole dress, puts a beautiful crown on his head, instead of ashes, anoints his body with oil, and arrays himself with gay clothing, instead of torn garments: So I will impart the gladness of pardon, to such genuine members of the church, as mourn over the guilt of sin; I will work a conformity to my image, in those who sorrow for the depravity of their nature; I will bestow the consolations of my Spirit, on the heart imbibed by the accusations of conscience; and fill their mouth with praise, who sat silent through a spirit of heaviness, that through the influence of spiritual joy, they may abound in the fruits of righteousness, and divine grace may be acknowledged in them, to the glory of JEHOVAH who bestowed it.

4. When the gospel of the Messiah hath proved successful with the other nations of the world, it shall be received by thee also, O Jewish nation; and, in consequence, thy descendents shall be restored to the land possessed by their fathers. They shall build the houses that were in ruin for a long time; they shall restore the desolate palaces to their former condition: they shall repair the cities that were waste, and fill the land with

2. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,

And the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn.

3. To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called Trees of righteousness, The planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.

4. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations,

* "Thou shalt bruise his head," Gen. iii. 15. † 1 John iii. 8.

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inhabitants, which had lain desolate for a series of ages.

5. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen, and your vine-dressers.

5. At that time, ye shall be spiritually-minded; your disposition shall be widely different from that of your fathers, when they first possessed the land; for the necessary concern about your temporal affairs, ye shall commit to the strangers that live among you. The descendants of other nations shall feed your flocks, and shall cultivate your fields and vineyards.

6. But ye shall be named, the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you, the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.

6. But ye shall be set apart for the service of JEHOVAH, like the priests who were separated from the people, to serve at the altar. Ye shall be the ministers of our God, in propagating the knowledge of the Messiah, among the nations. In consequence, the riches of the nations shall be at your disposal; but ye shall boast in making known to them the Messiah, whom they shall esteem their glory.

7. For your shame, ye shall have double; and for confusion, they shall rejoice in their portion; therefore, in their land they shall possess the double; everlasting joy shall be unto them.

7. Instead of the shame ye experienced in your dispersion, ye shall receive double honour to what was given you formerly, after ye are possessed of your inheritance. Instead of the ignominy with which ye were treated, by the nations among whom ye sojourned, ye shall rejoice in the honour conferred on you, in their land; for in the countries of the heathen, whither ye go to preach the Messiah, ye shall inherit honour and happiness, double to your former contempt and misery; and your joy being spiritual, it shall be to you the earnest of eternal happiness.

8. For I, the Lord, love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and I will direct their works in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

8. Be assured of the completion of this prophecy, for I am JEHOVAH, led by my nature, to love the righteousness of the converted Jews, as much as I hated the rapine and hypocrisy of their fathers. I will therefore faithfully reward the services which they perform to me, and receive them into the bonds of that covenant, ratified by the Messiah, which changeth not, as to the manner of its dispensation*; and secureth everlasting happiness to those who have an interest in it.

9. And their seed shall be known among

9. And these descendants of the Jews, that are converted, shall be illustrious among the other na-

* See Jer. xxxi. 3. 18.

tions, for their superior zeal in God's service, and their superior holiness in practice. And their offspring for generations shall be honoured, by all the people on earth. All that see their conduct, shall acknowledge that they are a people whom JEHOVAH hath peculiarly blessed.

10. When thou art converted, and received into the bonds of the covenant, thou shalt sing this hymn of praise :

I will greatly rejoice in the Messiah, who is JEHOVAH; my soul shall exult in him, who is my God: Whereas my soul, through depravity and guilt, resembled one naked, unmeet to appear in the court of the great King, unfit to be acquitted in the judgment; yet now he hath bestowed on me the hope of eternal salvation, as a garment; he hath removed my guilt, covering me with his perfect righteousness, as with a robe, so that I now resemble a bridegroom, arrayed with glorious and beautiful garments, like those of the high-priest, when he entered the most holy place; or a bride adorned with costly jewels, on the day of her espousals.

11. As the earth, warmed by the natural sun, pusheth forth her tender shoots; and as a garden, watered by the dew of heaven, maketh her seed to germinate: so my soul, warmed by the presence of JEHOVAH, the Sun of righteousness, and watered by the influences of his Spirit, is made fruitful in the works of righteousness, and is excited to utter praise, in the presence of all nations.

the Gentiles; and their offspring among the people: all that see them, shall acknowledge them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.

10. I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness; as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

11. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, before all the nations.

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CHAPTER LXII.

THE ARGUMENT.

IN order to confirm the promises concerning the conversion and restoration of the Jewish nation, made in the preceding chapter, the Messiah is introduced here, interceding to that effect. Some have imagined, that the prophet speaks in his own person, but had the term *Hephzibah*, ver. 4. been translated, the contrary would be obvious to every reader; for it signifies, "the object of *my* delight." Now the church is the object of the Messiah's delight, and therefore, it is the Messiah that speaks from the beginning of the chapter.

Again, it is he who speaks, ver. 6. "I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem;" for the sense is the same with that of the apostle, Eph. iv. 8. "When he ascended up on high, he gave gifts to men, some apostles, some prophets," &c.

The Messiah intimates his continual and all-powerful intercession, for the Jewish nation, ver. 1.; he shews their conversion and sanctification, in consequence, ver. 2.; their superiority to other nations, as members of the church, ver. 3.; their restoration to the land possessed by their fathers, ver. 4.; their interest in the covenant, ver. 5.

As another ground to hope for the completion of these promises, the Messiah represents the prayers of the ministers, and members of his church, pleading for the same event, ver. 6, 7.

God, the Father, is introduced, solemnly swearing, in answer to these intercessions, that he will bestow on the Jews, the possession and peaceable enjoyment of the promised land, ver. 8, 9. As another confirmation of the promise, the actual conversion of the Jews, and the removal of obstacles, that lay in the way of their restoration, is represented to the eye of faith, ver. 10.

Finally, it is confirmed by God's declaring that the Messiah should come to them, and that they should submit to him as their Saviour, ver. 11, 12.

THE PARAPHRASE.

Thus saith the MESSIAH,

1. For the sake of the church, in general, I will intercede, and for the sake of the Jewish nation, in particular, I will not cease to plead with my eternal Father, until the Jews, by accepting my righteousness*, be justified in his sight, and that conspicuously, as a strong light is easily seen; until they are delivered from their sins, and from their miseries, to the conviction of the most remote nations, as a blazing torch is seen at a great distance.

2. Surely all nations shall see thee justified, by the application of my righteousness, and all the kings of the earth shall acknowledge thee to be a glorious nation, on account of the privileges, temporal and spiritual, bestowed upon thee. As it has been customary to give a new name, to persons † whose condition was materially changed to the better; so thou shalt be called by a new name ‡, not ignorantly, nor presumptuously, but by the appointment of JEHOVAH, expressive of a glorious change in thy condition.

3. As the beautiful crown worn by the high-priest, is the most glorious part of the priestly habit; and as a royal diadem forms the most conspicuous ornament of the royal dress; so thou shalt be the most glorious part, and the most conspicuous ornament of the true church, through the special grace of JEHOVAH, and the peculiar protection of thy God.

* Righteousness and salvation are joined together, because the one is the cause, the other is the effect. And in regard, apostate man has no righteousness of his own to procure salvation, he must rely on the perfect righteousness of the Mediator. By faith there is a transfer of the Mediator's righteousness to the church in general, and to each individual soul in particular. Hence the expressions, *my* righteousness, and *thy* righteousness, when they respect justification, are synonymous. Compare Jer. xxiii. 6. "This is *his* name whereby *he* shall be called, The Lord our righteousness;" with

Jer. xxxiii. 16. "This is the name whereby *he* shall be called, The Lord our righteousness." See likewise Rom. x. 4. 2 Cor. v. 21.

† So Abraham, Sarah, Israel.

‡ Several new names are given the Jewish nation after their conversion. See Jer. xxxiii. 16. Ezek. xlvi. 35. Ver. 4. 11, &c. of this chapter. The first of these is expressive of their justification; the second of God's residence among them; the third of his delight in them; the fourth of the sanctification; and the fifth of the multitude of their converts.

THE TEXT.

1. For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof, as a lamp that burneth.

2. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory; and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

3. Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hands of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.

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4. Thou shalt no more be termed; For-faken; neither shall thy land any more be termed, Desolate; but thou shalt be called, Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah; for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.

5. For as a young man marieth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee; and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.

6. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace, day nor night. Ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence;

7. And give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.

8. The Lord hath sworn by his right hand, and the arm of his strength, Surely I will no more give thy corn to be meat for thine enemies; and the sons of the stranger shall not drink thy wine, for the which thou hast laboured.

4. It shall be no more said of thee, that thou art a nation forsaken of God; neither shall thy land be remarkable for its desolation. But thou shalt be known to be the object of my delight, and thy land shall be compared to a wedded matron. For JEHOVAH shall indeed delight in thee, when thou art converted; and thy land shall be full of inhabitants, as the wedded matron's family is full of children.

5. As a young man weddeth a virgin, the object of his affection, with delight; so shall thy Restorer *, the Messiah, enter into covenant with thee; and, as a bridegroom rejoiceth in his bride, the object of his choice, so shall thy God rejoice, in receiving thee into the bonds of the covenant.

6, 7. I have, as the great Head of the church, appointed various church-officers, as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers, to instruct and pray for the people: as the watchmen on the walls of Jerusalem, were appointed to give warning, and pray for their fellow-citizens. Now these church-officers shall not cease, even during the long obscure night of Jewish infidelity, to intercede with God for their conversion. O ye that make mention of the name of JEHOVAH in sincerity, cease not to pray, be urgent in pleading with your God, until he establish the kingdom of the Messiah, and make the Jewish nation, as a part of that kingdom, matter of praise to all the nations of the earth.

8, 9. In answer to the intercession of the Messiah, and the prayers of his faithful servants, JEHOVAH, the eternal Father, hath sworn by his almighty power, in a solemn manner, as when a man lifts up his right hand, thus: I will restore thee, O Israel, to thy land, thou shalt enjoy it, and continue in it: I will no more give thy corn for food to thy invading enemies; nor shall the descendents of strangers drink thy wine, the pro-

* The word translated "thy sons," in our English version, signifies likewise restorer, by altering the points, which make no part of the language. By our translation, the propriety of the metaphor is violated, and the latter clause of the verse is

contradicted, "thy God shall rejoice in thee." By the translation of Lowth, given in the paraphrase, propriety is restored to the metaphor, and harmony to the two clauses of the verse.

duce of thy land, for which thou hast laboured. But the people of the land that reap the harvest shall eat it, with gratitude in their hearts, and praise in their mouths, to JEHOVAH, the rich provider. And the people of the land that gather the vintage, shall drink the wine, not to the gratification of their lusts, but to my glory; as much as the wine consecrated to my service, and drunk in my courts.

10. As a further confirmation of the promised conversion and restoration, I heard JEHOVAH issue his sovereign mandates, to the several parties concerned in these great events. To the Jews he said, "Pass ye, pass ye, through the gate of regeneration, from the prison of infidelity and sin." As a king says to the pioneers of his army, Prepare the way, cast up the causeway, clear it from the stones; so he said to the messengers of his word, "Prepare the people for their restoration, make plain the way of reconciliation with me, remove their objections against it." As a king, intending to levy troops, commands a standard to be lifted up, to which his people shall gather, from all parts of his dominions; so the King of kings shall issue his orders, and collect the Jews from the several nations, as a previous step to their being restored to the promised land.

11, 12. JEHOVAH declared to me an astonishing truth, that the way of reconciliation to the Jews is, by a submission to the Messiah whom they rejected: For, to the messengers of his word, he issued a proclamation, the truth of which shall be made manifest to the remotest regions of the earth; thus, "Say ye to the Jewish nation, Look with astonishment, the Messiah whom thou didst crucify, cometh as thy Saviour to deliver thee! See him whom ye rejected, as being unable to reward his friends, or punish his enemies! the reward of eternal salvation, his purchase, is with him, to bestow on thee; and his work of vengeance, in punishing his enemies, has been evident for ages, before he manifested himself to thee. And when the Jews shall submit to the Messiah, they shall be called, and justly esteemed, The holy people, being sanctified by his Spirit;

9. But they that have gathered it shall eat it, and praise the Lord; and they that have brought it together, shall drink it, in the courts of my holiness.

10. Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the high way; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people.

11. Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold his reward is with him, and his work before him.

12. And they shall call them The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord; and thou

shalt be called, Sought out, a city not forsaken.

the redeemed of JEHOVAH, being ransomed by his blood; and thou, Jewish nation, shalt be called, and deservedly reckoned, The nation much desired of God, who delighteth in thee, and of men who court thy favour and fellowship. Thou shalt be the reverse of all thou hast been in thy dispersion, when forsaken.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE ARGUMENT.

SOME interpreters have supposed, that the immediate and only design of the Spirit of prophecy here, is to represent the sufferings of our Saviour. But, that he represents the triumph of Christ over the enemies of his church, in the latter days, coeval with the conversion and restoration of the Jews, mentioned in the preceding chapter, is obvious, from the following reasons:

1. He says, "I will tread down *the people* in mine anger." Now, though he spoiled principalities and powers on his cross, so far was he from treading down the people, that he endured the contradiction of sinners.

2. This same person is introduced, Rev. xix. even he who "is called the word of God," ver. 13. "the King of kings, and the Lord of lords," ver. 16. He is in the same attire, "a vesture dipped in blood," ver. 13. He performs the same work, "he treadeth the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God," ver. 15. From the coincidence of these circumstances, I infer, that the apostle is the true interpreter of the prophet. But the event pointed out is, the battle of Armageddon, in the latter days, in which Antichrist and his adherents make their last effort. "I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth and their armies, gathered together to make war on him that sat on the throne, and his army," ver. 19. and the issue of the battle is the final extirpation of Antichrist and his party. "The beast was taken," &c. ver. 20. consequently this slaughter of Edom refers to the latter days likewise.

3. The time of the event mentioned by the prophet, cannot accord with the time of Christ's passion, but fully agrees with the time of the event mentioned above. The day of vengeance on Edom and Bozrah, is the same with the year of the redeemed, ver. 4.; but the year of the redeemed refers to the close of the preceding chap-

ter, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy (salvation) Saviour cometh, behold his reward is with him, and his work before him, and they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." And these expressions intimate, the conversion and restoration of the Jews in the latter days. Now Christ's passion was the prelude to their dispersion, but this vengeance on Edom coincides with their restoration.

In ver. 1,---6. we have a dialogue betwixt the Messiah and the prophet, concerning the battle of Armageddon. The prophet asks concerning his person, who he is? The Messiah answers, by shewing his greatness and power, ver. 1. The prophet questions, concerning the colour of his apparel. The Messiah answers, by intimating the greatness of the slaughter wrought upon his enemies; and the reason of his anger at their violence; his fury or jealousy over his people, ver. 3.; that the time was come for their deliverance, and for executing vengeance on the wicked, ver. 4.; and the helpless condition of his people, ver. 5, 6.

From ver. 7. to the close, is shewed the spirit of his people, at the period of their deliverance; they are no longer obstinate unbelievers, as during their dispersion, but humble and penitent, acknowledging his past mercies, and their ungrateful returns, pleading deliverance by various arguments.

The steps by which they are led to this penitent disposition are represented. The prophet, personating the teachers employed for their conversion, intimates God's former loving-kindnesses, and the causes of those afflicting dispensations of his Providence, particularly in their calamitous dispersion, which made him appear to them an enemy, ver. 7,---10.

The people of Israel, convinced by the representation, meditate on his former loving-kindness, as a ground of faith, in pleading with him to be restored again to his favour, ver. 11,---14.

The prayer by which they plead with him, is laid before us from ver. 15. to the close of this chapter, and in the whole of the next chapter.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. PROPHET. Who is this that cometh up from the place, where enemies were collected, virulent as the Edomites of old? whose garments are of a red colour, as having made an immense slaughter of them, even in their strong hold? Who is this, whose justice is made manifest in their destruction, whose power is displayed, like that of

THE TEXT.

1. Who is this that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah? that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save,

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a hero, returning in strength, not faintness, from the field of battle?

MESSIAH. I am he, who, "as head over all things to the church," am faithful to my promises, and have power to deliver her from all her oppressors.

2. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine-fat?

2. PROPH. Why is thine apparel of a red colour? like the garments of one treading in the wine-fat, when sprinkled with the juice of the grapes?

3. I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.

3. MESS. I have collected the enemies of my people into one place, and there I have destroyed them; as grapes fully ripe are gathered into the wine-fat, and there trampled; I make no account of the instruments employed by me in the slaughter; the work is mine, I have performed it. I have been induced to destroy them, from a just indignation at their violence, and irreclaimable wickedness; as well as from jealousy over my chosen people, whom they oppressed. It is the blood of these enemies that has coloured my garments; I have made myself conspicuous and glorious, in their destruction.

4. For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come.

4. It was at all times my firm resolution, to execute vengeance on the enemies of my church, and to afford deliverance to my people. Now the period is come, which my wisdom appointed for these events; my enemies are ripe for destruction; my people for deliverance. "The times of the Gentiles, by whom Jerusalem has been trodden down, are fulfilled."

5. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold; therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me, and my fury it upheld me.

5, 6. The helpless condition of my people, who were objects of astonishment for their misery, determined me to interpose for their deliverance; my power has procured their salvation; my jealousy excited me to exert it. Accordingly I have destroyed the people who were enemies to them, in mine anger; I have made them to waver in their counsels, as persons intoxicated stagger with strong drink; I have made an utter end of their power.

6. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down strength to the earth.

7. About the time of the Messiah's interposition for the deliverance of his people, the Jews

7. I will mention the loving-kindnesses

shall be converted in the following manner : The teachers of these times shall say, I will mention to you, O house of Israel, the loving-kindness of JEHOVAH, to the praise of JEHOVAH, in order to remove from your heart the sentiments which detract from his character, and represent him as an enemy.

How many are the benefits which JEHOVAH hath bestowed on us ! How great is his goodness to the house of Israel ! while he bestowed them, not according to their desert, but according to his mercy and free grace.

8. For he entered into covenant with them, promising to be their God, and that they should be his people ; requiring fidelity on their part, that he might fulfil the promises on his part. So he was their deliverer from the bondage of Egypt.

9. In all their afflictions, in the wilderness, he was afflicted, as a tender-hearted parent feels the stroke, with which he chastises an obstinate child : The angel of his presence * protected them, in a pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. When their sins made them justly liable to destruction, in his love and compassion he forgave them, and redeemed them. He bore with long-suffering patience, their manifold provocations ; and carried them, as a father carries his child in his arms, during all the days of their sojourning in the wilderness.

10. But in return for his loving-kindness, they rebelled against his commandments repeatedly, in the wilderness. They grieved his Holy Spirit †, by disputing the authority of their teachers, and resisting the instructions given, by their proneness to idolatry ; so that God, who is an enemy to sin, was constrained to be an enemy to them, and to fight against them, by the various calamities brought upon their nation.

11. The people of Israel, convinced by this representation, called to mind the days of old, the conduct of God to Moses and his people, as a ground of encouragement to them. They medi-

of the Lord, and the praises of the Lord, according to all that the Lord hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them, according to his mercies, and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses.

8. For he said, Surely they are my people, children that will not lie ; so he was their Saviour.

9. In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them : In his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them ; and he bare them, and carried them, all the days of old.

10. But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit ; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

11. Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought

* The same with the angel of the covenant.

† Psal. lxxviii. and cvi. are the best comments on this passage.

them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is he that put his holy Spirit within him.

12. That led them by the right hand of Moses, with his glorious arm, dividing the water before them, to make himself an everlasting name;

13. That led them through the deep, as an horse in the wilderness, that they should not stumble.

14. As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the Lord caused him to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name.

15. Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels, and of thy mercies toward me, are they restrained?

tated thus: Where is that God, who brought his people out of the Red Sea, leading them safely as a flock, by the hand of Moses, the shepherd whom he appointed? Where is he, who bestowed his Holy Spirit on the shepherd, suitable to the circumstances of the flock? Does he not live? Has he not the same Spirit to bestow?

12. Where is he, who by the guidance of Moses conducted his people, manifesting his almighty power, in dividing the waters of the Red Sea before them; that his perfections might be the refuge of his people, in all the ages that follow after?

13. Where is he, who in their greatest difficulty, relieved them so effectually, as to lead them through the sea, not only in a dry, but in a plain path, where they could move as easily, as the courser in the plain, without the danger of stumbling?

14. Where is he, who conducted them through the distresses of the wilderness, to the rest of the promised land, spiritual as well as temporal; as a flock led over the mountains, to a rich and fertile valley, where they find abundance of pasture and rest; and all this for the purpose of manifesting his glorious perfections, as a ground of hope to his people? Is he not the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever? He is not less willing to receive, nor less able to grant, the requests of his people now, than he was in the days of our fathers.

15. The people of Israel, encouraged by these reflections, address God in the following prayer: O thou, whose dwelling is in heaven, from whence thou viewest and rulest the children of men; thou Holy One, who deemest it thy glory, to fulfil thy promises, and grant the requests of thy people; look in mercy on our situation, consider our present distress: where is that zeal for thy glory, which induced thee so frequently to spare our fathers; that power thou didst exert for their relief? Where is that paternal love, which made thy bowels yearn over their miseries? thy mercies that endure for ever; are these restrained from us, their children?

16. Doubtless thou art our Father, by the covenant-relation which subsists betwixt thee and our nation; though we are the unworthy descendants of Abraham, who "was strong in faith, giving glory to thee;" though we are unfit to be reckoned of the posterity of Israel, who "wrestled with thee in Peniel, and prevailed;" thou, O JEHOVAH, art our Father; and we trust that thou wilt prove our Redeemer, because thy covenant is founded on thy own unchangeable perfections.

17. O JEHOVAH, we are chargeable with blindness of blind, in remaining so long ignorant of thy way of salvation; with hardness of heart, in being so long alienated from thy fear. Thou hast hitherto, in just judgment, left us, under the influence of this blindness and hardness. What profit is it to thee, that we should continue so? Return, we beseech thee, with pardoning mercy, and sanctifying grace; for we are thy servants, the tribes whom thou hast chosen for thine inheritance; the people formed for the manifestation of thy glory.

18. Restore us to the land promised to our fathers; for we, the people separated by thee from other nations, have possessed it but a short time, compared with that in which we have been expelled out of it. And they who have possessed it, ever since our expulsion, have been enemies to the true religion.

19. We are thy people by covenant, and by the many interpositions of thy Providence in behalf of our nation of old; whereas they who now possess the land, were never the genuine subjects of thy government, nor members of the true church*.

16. Doubtless thou art our Father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not; thou, O Lord, art our Father, our Redeemer; thy name is from everlasting.

17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our heart from thy fear? Return for thy servants sake, the tribes of thine inheritance.

18. The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while; our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary.

19. We are thine, thou never barest rule over them; they were not called by thy name.

* Lowth translates the passage thus: "We have long been as those whom thou hast not ruled, who have not been called by thy name." But he brings no authority to justify such a deviation from the original, where it runs thus: "We were thine of old, thou hast not ruled over them, nor was

thy name called upon them." They run a comparison betwixt themselves, and their adversaries, mentioned in the close of the preceding verse. When we reflect, that the adversaries in view are, the blasphemous king and his adherents, we see how just is the character given of them.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE ARGUMENT.

SEE the Argument of the preceding Chapter.

THE TEXT.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens, that thou wouldst come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence.

2. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence.

3. When thou didst terrible things, which we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence.

4. For since the beginning of the world, men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

1. O that thou wouldst manifest thine interposition, and exert thy power in removing all the difficulties which lie in the way of our deliverance.

2. As the fire dissolveth the metal, let thy power dissolve the hardness of our hearts *; as the fire causeth the waters to boil, so let thy power excite tumults † among our enemies, not only for our deliverance, but likewise to extend a knowledge of thee, to those who are now adversaries to thy glory; that all nations may, with reverence, submit themselves to thee, on account of the manifestation of thy power.

3. We are encouraged to request so signal an interposition in our favour, from the conduct of thy Providence to our nation, in past times. When we had no expectation of a release from Egyptian bondage, thou didst shew terrible signs in the land of Egypt, thou didst visibly interpose, and effectually remove, the difficulties which lay in the way of our deliverance.

4. We are emboldened to ask thine interposition, more signally than of old, from the greatness of thy love, which hath prepared blessings for thy people, beyond what the eye hath seen, the ear hath heard, or the heart hath conceived! and which is gradually revealed to thy people; so that former ages comprehended not the grace ma-

* Alluding to verse 17. of the former chapter.

† The answer of this prayer is given us by Zechariah xiv. 13. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great tumult from

the Lord shall be among them, and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise against the hand of his neighbour."

nifested to us *, nor can we comprehend the glory † thou wilt bestow hereafter.

5. We are emboldened to present our supplications to thee, in regard thou art the hearer of prayer: for thou deignest, according to thy promise, to meet and to commune with those who wait on thee, in the means of thine appointment; who are sincere and upright; who cheerfully serve thee, and acknowledge thee in the dispensations of thy Providence. We have sinned, but thou wast provoked with our fathers of old, and didst forgive them, therefore we hope we shall be saved ‡.

6. We acknowledge that our nature is wholly defiled by sin, our best performances have no merit in them, but resemble a garment of filthy rags, in which there is neither beauty nor warmth; for they cannot render us beautiful in thine eyes, nor procure for us thy favour; we have not profited by the means bestowed on us, but are like trees in thy vineyard, which have produced withering leaves and no fruit. Our iniquities have justly separated us from thee, for a season, and might have separated us for ever, as withered leaves are by the wind driven away.

7. We are chargeable with neglect of prayer, and with the want of faith and fervency in the supplications we offered; therefore thou hast justly withdrawn the manifestations of thy loving-kindness, and visited us with those calamities, which were intended, like the refiner's fire, to dissolve the hardness of our hearts, and to purge away our sins.

8. But now, O JEHOVAH, we trust thou art our Father, thou art our Creator, in whose hand we,

5. Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways; behold thou art wroth, for we have sinned; in those is continuance, and we shall be saved.

6. But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

7. And there is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee, for thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities.

8. But now, O Lord, thou art our Father;

* See 1 Cor. ii. 9.

† 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

‡ I consider the word *abam*, as referring to the fathers, not, as in our translation, to the sins, and the word *abolam*, certainly signifies "of old," not continuance; so *Vitranga*. To say with Lowth, that there is no mention of the fathers before, is not accurate; for the ground on which they offer their supplications, is a remembrance of God's dealing with their fathers, chap. lxiii. ver. 11, --- 14. and ver. 3. of this chap. When there is a prayer for the nation, most commonly they introduce their fathers, either

in confessing sin, or giving praise: so Dan. ix. 5, 6. 8. and repeatedly in the Psalms. There is no impropriety in this, any more than if a person advanced in years, should confess the sins, and acknowledge the mercies of his youth; for the nation is considered as the same individual, in all the periods of its existence. The sense of this contested passage, appears to me to be the same with Psalm cvi. 6. 8. in which there is no difficulty, "We have sinned with our fathers. Our fathers provoked him at the Red Sea, nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake."

we are the clay, and thou our Potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.

9. Be not wroth very sore, O Lord, neither remember iniquity for ever; behold, see, we beseech thee, we are all thy people.

10. Thy holy cities are a wilderness, Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

11. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised thee, is burnt up with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid waste.

12. Wilt thou refrain thyself for these things, O Lord? Wilt thou hold thy peace, and afflict us very sore?

and our condition are, as much as the clay is in the hand of the potter, to give it what form he pleases; and thou art our God in covenant, we are "thy workmanship created in Christ Jesus to good works."

9 O JEHOVAH, correct us in measure, not in anger, "chasten us not in thy hot displeasure." Though thou hast remembered our iniquities so long, yet remember them not for ever. Look in mercy on us, we beseech thee, we are now all thy people, made willing in the day of thy power.

10. We request that thou wouldst restore us to our land, for thou art faithful to the promise made to our fathers, that their seed should inherit the land for ever; whereas at present, the cities, once possessed by a people separated for thy glory, and where thy name was invoked, are uninhabited; the ordinances of thy institution are unfrequented; and the city where thou didst put thy name, is waste or inhabited by strangers.

11. Our national church, formerly dedicated to thee, and beautiful in thine eye, is now dissolved, and the ordinances of religion, formerly so pleasant to our souls, cannot, in our present state, be enjoyed.

12. In order to restore these, Wilt thou not interpose? Wilt thou not speak the word with authority, and it shall be done? Wilt thou not prevent the continuance of our bitter affliction any longer?

SIXTH PARALLEL VIEW of the Gospel Times.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THIS chapter is a distinct section of prophecy, giving another parallel view of the period that elapses from the coming of the Messiah, to the millennium. It begins with an account of the first propagation of the gospel among the Gentiles, and ends with an account of the new heavens and new earth.

The design of this view is, to shew the different reception of the Messiah by various persons, from his first appearance in the world, until the establishment of his kingdom.

The Spirit of prophecy intimates, that the Gentiles, formerly ignorant of the Messiah, should receive him, ver. 1. compare with Rom. x. 20. That the Jews, who had been all along instructed to expect him, should reject him, ver. 2. compare with Rom. x. 21. This sin was aggravated by their opposition to God's will, in every period of their existence as a nation, ver. 3, 4, 5.

God intimates his resolution to punish them, ver. 6, 7. Yet that he will spare a remnant, as a separate people, to be the progenitors of a race, afterwards to be restored to his favour, ver. 8, 9, 10.

He enlarges on the judgments to be inflicted on the Jews, for rejecting the Messiah; contrasting these, with the blessings to be bestowed on those who should receive him, ver. 11,---16. He describes the millennial church, when the Messiah shall be received by Jews and Gentiles; dwelling particularly on the glory of the Jewish church, upon their restoration, ver. 17,---25.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus saith JEHOVAH, The period shall come, when I shall be found as their God, of nations who were formerly ignorant of me; when I shall be made manifest to their faith, who formerly desired no interest in me; when I shall

THE TEXT.

1. I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not; I said, Behold me, unto a nation that

was not called by my name.

2. I have spread out my hands all the day, unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts.

3. A people that provoketh me to anger continually, to my face; that sacrificeth in gardens, and burneth incense upon altars of brick.

4. Which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments; which eat swines flesh, and broth of abominable things is in their vessels.

5. Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me, for I am holier than thou; these are a smoke in my nose,

successfully offer grace and salvation to those who formerly, neither enjoyed my ordinances, nor invoked my name in them.

2. At the same time, the Jews shall reject me, to whom I offered grace and salvation, in every period of their existence, as a nation; but they were all along a people that rebelled against my authority, walking in an evil way, contrary to my good precepts; being under the influence of their own imagination and passions.

3. They have justly and continually offended me, notwithstanding the knowledge of my omniscience, constantly inculcated upon them: they are chargeable with idolatry, by worshipping false gods in gardens*, according to the heathenish rites. And even when they pretended to worship me, they performed the service, not according to my precept, which required to build an altar of stone, (Exod. xx. 25.) but after the manner of heathen idolaters, on altars of brick.

4. They are chargeable with necromancy†, seeking a knowledge of future events from the dead, and for that purpose lodging among graves, and offer the sacrifices used by the heathens on such occasions, which I declared to be abominable to me.

5. After they were weaned from these gross sins, they affected to be a holy people, and being puffed up with a conceit of their own superior sanctity, despised all other nations‡, whereas in

* Most likely the allusion is to the worship of Ashtoreth.

†

Huc dona sacerdos
Cum tulit et cæsarum ovium sub nocte silenti
Pellibus incubuit stratis, somnosque petivit;
Multa modis simulacra videt volitantia miris,
Et varias audit voces, fruiturque deorum
Colloquio, atque imis Acheronta affatur avernis. VIRG. Eneid. vii. 86.

First on the fleeces of the slaughter'd sheep,
By night the sacred priest dissolves in sleep,
Where in a trance, before his slumb'ring eye,
Their airy forms and wond'rous visions fly.
He calls the powers who guard th' infernal floods,
And talks inspir'd familiar with the gods.

PITT.

‡ This verse describes the Jews in our Lord's time; and the account which our Lord gives of the Pharisees, is the best interpretation of it.

reality, their holiness consisted in the observation of certain ceremonial rites, while they "neglected the weightier matters of the law;" and in outward shew, while inwardly they were "ravening wolves." The hypocrisy of these is as offensive to me, as an unfavoury steam is to the nose of man; as continually offensive, as the steam which arises from a fire constantly burning.

6. Their conduct is in my view, as if it were written in a record; I will no longer refrain from pronouncing their sentence, I will punish them according to their desert.

7. Even you, O house of Israel, (saith JEHOVAH) for your own sins, and the sins of your fathers together, who committed idolatry upon high places, after the manner of the heathen, thus blaspheming my spiritual holy nature; I will inflict a punishment proportioned to the degree of their guilt, including the former as well as the latter sins of the nation*.

8. Thus saith JEHOVAH, At the time the punishment threatened shall be inflicted, I will command to spare a few: just as at the time of the vintage, one finding a few good grapes in the cluster, says, Destroy not these, by casting them into the wine-vat, they will prove a blessing, by reserving them for seed; thus will I spare a remnant, for the sake of the offspring that will proceed from them, to serve me; I will not destroy them all.

9. And I will bring forth a progeny from this remnant, to inherit the land given by promise to their fathers, so fulfilling my word concerning the seed of Jacob, and the descendents of Judah. This progeny being elect, according to my foreknowledge, shall inherit the land, and being faithful servants to me, shall dwell in it.

10. They shall possess the whole land, and wealth in it; Sharon shall be a fold for their flocks,

a fire that burneth all the day.

6. Behold, it is written before me, I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

7. Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the Lord, which have burnt incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed me upon the hills; therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

8. Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all.

9. And I will bring forth a seed out of Jacob, and out of Judah an inheritor of my mountains; and mine elect shall inherit it, and my servants shall dwell there.

10. And Sharon shall be a fold of flocks, and

* The same sentiment is clearly expressed by our Saviour, in addressing the men of his generation, who are here intended, "Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from

the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar; verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation," Mat. xxiii. 35, 36.

the valley of Achor a place for the herds to lie down in, for my people that have sought me.

11. But ye are they that forsake the Lord; that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for that troop, and that furnish the drink-offering unto that number.

12. Therefore will I number you to the sword, and ye shall all bow down to the slaughter; because when I called, ye did not answer, when I spake, ye did not hear, but did evil before mine eyes, and did choose that wherein I delighted not.

and the valley of Achor a place for their herds to lie down in*.

11. But ye, O men of that generation, on whom the punishment threatened shall be inflicted, are chargeable with forsaking JEHOVAH, who instructed your nation for so long a time; with overlooking the end of those ordinances he appointed; with being wholly intent on gratifying your sensual appetites, and your covetousness †.

12. Therefore, ye covetous men, who delight in numbering much wealth, I shall number you in great multitudes to the sword; and ye sensualists, who delight in feasting, I shall prepare ‡ you by the slaughter, as a feast for the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven: because, when I called on you to submit to me as the Messiah, ye did not obey; when I proved my Divine mission, ye did not believe, but persevered in your sins, notwithstanding my remonstrances; and ad-

* Perhaps the words have a figurative meaning likewise, that they shall submit to him who is "the rose of Sharon," Song ii. 1.; and that after grievous trouble, they shall receive rest; for so the expression is used, Hos. ii. 15. "I will give her the valley of Achor, for a door of hope."

† The words in the original, are "Gad and Meni," which commentators have supposed to be false deities; but no such deities are mentioned in Scripture, nor by profane writers, so far as I know. My reasons for supposing that they signify sensuality and covetousness are, that the words represent the character of the Jewish nation in our Saviour's time, as appears from the connection; though the nation was at that time free from gross external idolatry, but was divided into two sects, Sadducees and Pharisees, and the distinguishing character of the former, was sensuality, of the latter, covetousness. Again, preparing a table, is a Scripture expression for feasting, preparing a table for a troop or company, fitly represents the character of those, who make eating and drinking, and its attendant gratifications, the sole business of their lives; while numbering or balancing fitly represents the employment of covetous men. It can be no objection to this interpretation,

that the expressions represent men offering sacrifice to Gad and Meni; for the apostle says, "Abstain from covetousness, which is idolatry." Every man's ruling passion is the deity whom he serves, and the desire of heart and life to gratify that passion, may be fully represented by offering sacrifice.

‡ There is an obvious allusion in the term *number*, to the sin with which they were charged. God intimates, that the punishment to be inflicted, would bear the image of the sin committed: as covetousness delights to number much wealth, so he would number to the sword many persons; thus making the sword as insatiable as their covetousness. I conjecture that the word **תברעו** should be **ערבתי**, the letters are the same, except the י for the ך, only transposed. Now this word bears the same allusion to **אדביתם**, preparing the table, as **מביתי** does to **כנו**. The sentence runs in the same manner, and the sense of the passage continues the same. Besides, a great slaughter is represented in Scripture, as preparing a feast to the beasts of the field, and the fowls of heaven, Ezek. xxxix. 17. Rev. xix. 17, 18. Above all, the truth of the interpretation appears from this, that the prophecy was literally fulfilled on the Jews by the Romans.

hered to the ceremonies of the law *, after I had ceased to delight in them.

13. Therefore thus saith the Lord JEHOVAH, I will clearly distinguish betwixt my servants and you. They who submit to me by faith and obedience, shall eat and drink spiritual food †, when ye shall be deprived of it; my servants shall rejoice in the hope of eternal glory, but ye shall be ashamed of that in which ye place your hope.

14. Behold my servants, conscious of my favour, shall "eat their bread with gladness, and singleness of heart;" but ye, when deserted of me, and hated of men, shall cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit.

15. Your name of Israelites, once dear to me, and honourable among men, shall be held in abhorrence, even by my chosen people; for the Lord JEHOVAH shall put an end to your national church, and call the members of his church by another name, that of Christians; yea he shall call himself by another name:

16. So that all who receive blessings from God, or pronounce blessings in his name, or devote themselves to his service, throughout the earth, shall call him, not by the name of the God of Israel, but the God of truth. And this state of things shall continue, until all the troubles that precede all the happiness of the church ‡, come to a period, and be swallowed up in the manifestations of my love; and all the sins that occasioned them, be removed from before me, by a thorough renovation.

17. For behold the period shall come, when I will work a great and extensive renovation, among

13. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold my servants shall eat, but ye shall be hungry; behold my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty; behold my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed.

14. Behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit.

15. And ye shall leave your name for a curse unto my chosen; for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name:

16. That he who blesteth himself in the earth, shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth, shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.

17. For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and

* The expressions are the same with Isa. lxvi. 4. "Yea, they chose that in which I delighted not." But it appears evidently from the context, ver. 1, 2, 3. that the thing in which he delighted not, was their adherence to the sacrifices and ceremonies of the law after he had abolished them:

† The expressions are similar to those of our Lord. "I am the bread of life, he that

cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst," John vi. 3.

‡ I consider the troubles here, to be the same with "the former" heavens and earth, mentioned in the next verse, and the design of the prophet is to shew, that the Jews would continue ejected from his church till the millennium.

the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.

18. But be ye glad, and rejoice for ever, in that which I create; for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

19. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.

20. There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days; for the child shall die an hundred years old: but the sinner, being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.

21. And they shall build houses, and inhabit them: and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.

22. They shall not build, and another inhabit, they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree, are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy

mankind, renewing high and low, rulers and subjects*.

18. At that time, ye, O house of Israel, shall rejoice with uninterrupted joy, in my work of renovation; for I will make your national establishment, and the members of your church, cause of joy to yourselves and others.

19. I will delight in your national establishment, and rejoice in your prosperity, as my people; so that no troubles similar to those which preceded †, shall occasion weeping and lamentation among you.

20. Untimely death, which was so long a scourge to the human race, shall be done away, at that period ‡; for as naturally as men are born infants, they shall arrive at old age, and fulfil the measure allotted to human life, being an hundred years; even sinners among them shall enjoy that privilege, though at the end of an hundred years, they shall be excluded from eternal happiness.

21. They who build houses, and plant vineyards, shall enjoy them.

22. They shall be free from the curse pronounced on the disobedient, (Deut. xxviii. 30.) building and planting for the enjoyment of others, after they are deprived of them by afflicting providences, or untimely death. The life of my people, like that of a tree, shall be free from disease and infirmity ||; and the offspring of mine elect,

* The moral world is, in Scripture-language, frequently represented by the natural world; the natural world consists of the heavens and the earth, so the moral world, of rulers and subjects.

† Many other instances might be quoted, in which the prophets speak comparatively, when they seem to speak absolutely; so, Isa. xxv. 8, 9. xlix. 10.

‡ Some have supposed, that during the millennium, the life of men shall be extended to several centuries, like that of the antediluvians, as if the prophet's meaning were, that the person who died an hundred years old, died a boy; but the interpreta-

tion in the paraphrase appears to me more natural. If any suppose that the term of human life, limited in other places of Scripture to seventy or eighty years, shall be enlarged at the millennium by twenty or thirty years; to that I see no objection.

|| Some have supposed, that the simile signifies a long duration of life, but that would contradict ver. 20. The explication in the paraphrase is more natural, because the ordinary term of old age, with disease and infirmity, would be a curse, and not a blessing; and some actually attained to old age, without disease or infirmity, as Moses Deut. xxxiv. 7. and Caleb, Josh. xiv. 10.

shall, for ages, enjoy the land, and the labours of the work of their hands.

23. Their labours shall not be consumed by their enemies, or destroyed by unnatural seasons. They shall not be deprived of their children, by captivity or untimely death; for they and their offspring are the seed whom JEHOVAH hath blessed; and his blessing is adequate to the accomplishment of these promises.

23. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

24. Their spiritual happiness shall be great, as their temporal bliss. My power can provide whatever is necessary for them, and I will "present them with blessings of my goodness," and speedily answer their requests.

24. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and whiles they are yet speaking, I will hear.

25. In that period, the fierce and tyrannical passions of men, by which they resemble wolves and lions, shall be subdued; so that they shall be meek and gentle as lambs. And the sentence pronounced against Satan, the deceiver of mankind, (Gen. iii. 14.) shall be executed; for he "shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and shut up, that he may no more deceive the nations, till the thousand years" (allotted for this happy period) "be fulfilled," Rev. xx. 3. Men shall not invade the rights, nor destroy the peace and happiness of each other, throughout the extent of my holy church, saith JEHOVAH.

25. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock; and dust shall be the serpents meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy, in all my holy mountain, saith the Lord.

Seventh PARALLEL VIEW of the Gospel Times.

THE chief design of this View, is to represent in order, the most remarkable events that occur from the beginning of the Christian era, to the millennium, so as to enable the attentive reader to carry on the series of events.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE ARGUMENT.

JEHOVAH is introduced solemnly renouncing the material temple, and choosing, instead of it, the spiritual temple of the heart, ver. 1, 2. He renounces, with equal solemnity, the legal sacrifices, yet intimates, that the Jewish nation would adhere to them, ver. 3. That they should be punished with a judicial blindness, so as to continue their adherence; and the causes of this punishment, ver. 4.

A comfortable promise to such of the Jews as submitted to the Messiah, and were ill treated by their brethren, ver. 5.

The destruction of the Jewish state and polity, ver. 6.

The successful propagation of the gospel among the nations, extensively and rapidly, ver. 7, 8.; the accomplishment of this promise confirmed, from God's omnipotence; ver. 9.

The conversion of the Jewish nation, ver. 10.

The joy of the Gentile churches on that occasion, and the consequent happiness, temporal and spiritual, of both united, ver. 11, 12, 13, 14.

The grievous punishment of their enemies, and of all the enemies of the true God, at that time on earth, ver. 15, 16.; reasons for that punishment, shewing the justice of it, ver. 17, 18.

Missionaries from the converted Jews, are sent to publish the glad tidings of salvation, to such nations as still remain ignorant of the Messiah, ver. 19.

The nations convey to Judea, such Jews as are dispersed among them, and wish to visit the Jewish church, ver. 20, 21.

That the Jews shall continue faithful servants to God for ever, ver. 22.

That all nations shall be united together, as members of the church, holding the same faith, using the same ordinances, ver. 23.

That they shall abhor the sins of former ages, and be convinced, that sin justly merits, and shall certainly receive eternal punishment.

THE PARAPHRASE.

1. Thus saith JEHOVAH, Under the future dispensation of the Messiah, my people shall apprehend my spiritual nature more clearly, and worship me in a manner more suitable to my perfections than at present; and the ceremonial law enjoined by Moses shall be abrogated. There shall be no material temple, in regard I am omnipresent; in the extensive heavens I reside, and the whole earth is under my controul. Is it reasonable, therefore, to suppose, that I dwell in a house built by human art *, or that my presence is confined to any particular place?

2. Besides, heaven and earth, and all things in them, are my workmanship; they are mine by right of creation. Is it reasonable to suppose, that I stand in need of a material temple built by man, or of the services performed in it? Surely not †: But I will choose for my residence, the spiritual temple of the heart, I will bestow my presence on every individual, of whatever nation ‡, who is humble from a sense of his own unworthiness, contrite in spirit from a conviction of sin, and who revereth my word.

3. The legal sacrifices shall likewise be abolished, and in regard the design of them shall then be accomplished, by the death of the Messiah, to persevere in offering them, will be as offensive to me, as the greatest violations of the moral or ceremonial law would be at present. Thus he that sacrificeth an ox, under the dispensation of the Messiah, shall be as criminal in my sight, as if he killed a man. He that sacrificeth a lamb then, shall commit as great an offence, as if he sacrificed a dog now. He that offereth an oblation then, shall be guilty of as great an abomination, as if he offered swines blood now. He that burneth incense

THE TEXT.

1. Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; Where is the house that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my rest?

2. For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord; but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

3. He that killeth an ox, is as if he slew a man; he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck; he that offereth an oblation, as if he offered swines blood; he that burneth incense, as if he blessed an idol: yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their soul delighteth in their abominations.

* 2 Chron. vi. 18.

† Acts xvii. 24, 25.

‡ Acts x. 34, 35.

then, shall be equally criminal with him who commits idolatry now. Yet surely the Jewish nation shall zealously adhere to the ceremonial law, after I have repealed it; they shall delight in offering sacrifices, notwithstanding they are abominable to me.

4. I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because, when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear; but they did evil before mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not.

4. I will therefore punish them with judicial blindness, so that they shall not perceive their error, and bring upon them the calamities which they dread, the destruction of their city and temple, and the dissolution of their national polity. These punishments, however severe, shall be inflicted according to justice; because I called upon them to receive and submit to the Messiah, but they would not obey; I urged upon them his divine mission, by the doctrines he taught, and the miracles he wrought, but they would not believe. They have thus, in rejecting the Messiah, done that which is evil in my sight, and, in adhering to the ceremonial law, they have chosen that in which I delighted not.

5. Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; your brethren that hated you, that cast you out for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified; but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed.

5. Hear ye the word of JEHOVAH for your consolation, ye that revere his word, and have submitted to the Messiah: Your brethren, the generality of the Jewish nation, who hate you, and have thrust you out of their synagogues*, on account of your respect for me, pretend that they have the glory of JEHOVAH in view, by persecuting you†; but he will appear conspicuously, in the course of his providence, affording you deliverance to your joy, and punishing them to their confusion.

6. A voice of noise from the city, a voice from the temple, a voice of the Lord that rendereth recompense to his enemies.

6. Hark! the threatening is accomplished; I hear the noise of a great tumult arising from the city of Jerusalem! the same tumultuous noise now ascends from the temple! They are both taken, sacked, and burnt by a foreign enemy. In these dispensations, the voice of JEHOVAH may be heard; for he hath appointed them, in order to render their desert to the Jewish nation, the enemies of his truth.

* For the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue, John ix. 22.

† The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think he doeth God service, John xvi. 2.

7. After this catastrophe, the glad tidings of the Messiah shall spread among the heathen nations, and multitudes of converts shall be suddenly introduced into the church; as if a woman should bring forth, before she was in travail, and should produce a desirable offspring*, before the time of her pangs came.

8. Indeed the number of converts, and their sudden introduction into the church, not only exceeds the experience of former ages, but they cannot be represented by the changes that take place in the natural world. Who hath ever seen or heard, that the earth perfected the vegetation of the seed sowed in it, in one day? or, that a whole nation was born of a woman, at one birth? These things are inconsistent with experience, and with the progress of natural causes and effects; yet the glad tidings concerning the Messiah, preached to the nations, shall instantly regenerate those who hear, as if the earth should perfect the vegetation of the seed sowed in it, in one day. And multitudes hearing the word preached, shall be regenerated at the same time; as if a whole nation were born of a woman, at one birth. Thus the true church, in the days of the Messiah, may be fitly compared to a woman, who should bring forth her children so soon as she conceived†.

9. Do those changes seem impossible to thee, O church! Consider that I have made preparation for the introduction of such a multitude of converts, by the previous sufferings and death of the Messiah: Shall that preparation be in vain? Reflect that souls are regenerated by my power: Shall that power be ineffectual? saith JEHOVAH.

7. Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man-child.

8. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day, or shall a nation be born at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.

9. Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth? saith the Lord: Shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb? saith thy God.

* John xvi. 21.

† Our translation says, "As soon as Zion travailed," and that is no doubt the word in our present Hebrew Bibles; but I am of opinion, it is an error of the transcriber, though introduced at an early period, for these reasons: 1. The words **חלה** and **חרה** are exceedingly similar, and might be easily mistaken. 2. *As soon* as Zion travailed, contradicts what was said in the preceding verse, "Before she travailed." 3. The translation in the paraphrase is more consistent with the metaphor used in

the preceding member of this verse: the earth perfecting the seed sowed in it, in one day, is similar to a woman's conceiving and bringing forth at the same time. 4. What is still more to the purpose, the meaning of the metaphor is, according to the translation given above, the incorruptible seed of the word is sowed by preaching, and the instant it is received by faith and love, the soul is born again. 5. The translation in the paraphrase, only can justify the strong expressions that precede. Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things?

10. Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.

11. That ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory.

12. For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream; then shall ye suck, ye shall be born upon her sides, and be dandled upon her knees,

13. As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

14. And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall flourish like an herb, and the hand of the Lord shall

10. "When the fulness of the Gentiles are come in, all Israel shall be saved." Rejoice, O ye members of the church, with the Jewish nation; and exult on account of their conversion, all ye that love them, seeing by it your affectionate prayers are answered. Be exceedingly joyful with them, all ye that mourned over their former condition, seeing now their infidelity is removed.

11. Your own privileges likewise, spiritual and temporal, shall be increased, in consequence of their conversion*. Ye shall receive a more abundant measure of grace, and a higher degree of honour, in consequence of the grace bestowed, and the honour conferred on them, - as the mother-church; even as children, when young, are satisfied with milk from the mother's breasts; and when grown, are delighted, by having the honour conferred on her, reflected on them.

12. For thus saith JEHOVAH, I will bestow spiritual peace on the Jewish nation, when converted, abundantly as the waters of the great river; the Gentiles shall submit to her authority as the mother-church, and consecrate their wealth to her service, copiously and constantly, as the waters of an overflowing stream; while she shall anxiously promote the spiritual and temporal advantage of you that are members of the Gentile churches; like the affectionate mother, who suckles her children with her breasts, carries them at her side, and dandles them on her knees.

13. As children are comforted, by the return of their mother, whom they deemed lost, to regulate the family, and distribute their food; so will I comfort you, ye members of the church, every where, by restoring the Jewish nation to the privileges of the mother-church; and ye shall receive abundant consolations through them.

14. And ye, O Jews, shall see this promise fulfilled; and your hearts shall rejoice in the accomplishment. Your hopes, when lost, shall be revived, and your souls, though spiritually dead, shall be quickened; as if dead and dried bones were

* What shall the receiving them again be, but life from the dead? Rom xi. 15.

united, covered with flesh and skin, and made to live * ; or as if withered herbs were refreshed and made green. And the power of JEHOVAH shall be manifested in his dealings with you his servants, and his indignation shall be displayed, at the same time, against his enemies, who oppose your restoration.

15. For behold, coeval with your restoration, JEHOVAH shall interpose by his providence, utterly to destroy the enemies of the true religion; even as a fire wholly consumeth what is thrown into it. He shall interpose suddenly, as chariots rush to the battle; and unexpectedly, as the whirlwind, involving all things in one common ruin, ariseth from a calm. His interposition shall be evident, from the greatness of the slaughter; it shall be like that of a mighty man giving vent to his anger with fury, and from the manner of his rebuke; for he shall consume his enemies by the fire of the elements †.

16. For JEHOVAH shall execute this judgment on all the carnally-minded, collected together into one place ‡, by the fire of the elements; and by the sword of that motly multitude, drawn against each other ||; and the number slain by JEHOVAH, in that decisive battle, shall be great.

17. Yet their slaughter is according to justice, seeing they are irreclaimable idolaters, of various denominations §, leagued against the truth; there-

be known towards his servants, and his indignation towards his enemies.

15. For behold, the Lord shall come with fire, and with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.

16. For by fire, and by his sword, will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.

17. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, behind

* See Ezek. xxxvii. 1,---14.

† See chap. xxx. ver. 27, 28. 30. 33.

‡ Zech. xiv. 13. Hag. ii. 21,---24. Isa. xlix. 26.

|| Armageddon, Rev. xvi. 16.

§ Various are the conjectures of the learned, respecting the kinds of idolatry here specified. Those which I have read, do not appear satisfactory to me. As conjectures are free, I shall offer one, leaving it to the reader's judgment. My conjecture is founded on this principle, that the battle here described is Armageddon; consequently, the idolaters here mentioned, are they who are gathered together against the Jews, in that battle. They are gathered together by three unclean spirits, of which one came out of the mouth of the dragon, another out of the mouth of the beast, and another out of the mouth of the false prophet, Rev. xvi.

13. The dragon signifies Satan appearing without disguise, an avowed enemy to Christ and his religion; the persons under his influence, in the latter, form two distinct classes, Mahometans and Pagans. The beast is Antichrist, and the false prophet the whole body of the Roman clergy. What if these four parties are pointed out here, by distinguishing characters? 1. They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens, *behind one tree*. The word *tree*, is not in the original; the phrase translated literally, is, *after one*. The word translated *behind*, is the same used when God approves of Caleb: according to the original it is, "he hath fulfilled *after* me;" so that I apprehend the meaning of the expression to be, "followers of or *after* one God."

It is well known, that the great part of

one tree in the midst, eating swines flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.

18. For I know their works, and their thoughts: It shall come that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.

fore they shall be consumed together, saith JEHOVAH.

18. And they cannot plead, Not guilty; for I, the Omniscient, know their outward conduct, and their inward thoughts; besides, by their destruction, I will open a free course to the gospel, and gather all the nations and languages of the earth, to be members of the true church; and they shall believe my word, and shall be convinced of my glorious perfections, especially as they are manifested in the Messiah.

the sanctity of Mahometans, consists in frequent washings of the body in pure water. After the most ordinary transactions, particularly when they have connection with women, (in which they seem to place the chief happiness, if not the great employment of human life), they must, by the laws of their religion, undergo a purification, by washing in cold water. The eastern nations are attached to gardens, from their climate. That attachment is increased in Mahometans, from their religion; in them the opulent build their houses and their harams. They form the scene of their pleasures here, and will, in their own opinion, constitute their eternal happiness hereafter. The great tenet of the Mahometan religion is, That there is but One God. They believe, that Mahomet was sent as a prophet, to rescue mankind from the errors of polytheism, and from the corruptions of Christianity, which introduced the worship of saints and angels. They pretend, that zeal for maintaining this truth, induced them to take up arms, to extend the kingdom of Mahomet over the world. In them, therefore, we find all these characters: 1. They sanctify and purify themselves in gardens, and are the professed followers of one God. These are "in the midst, 2. of those who eat swines flesh." To eat swines flesh, under the Mosaic economy, was the distinguishing mark of a Pagan. When Antiochus Epiphanes carried on a violent persecution against the Jews, in order to oblige them to renounce their religion, and embrace Paganism, the test which he required was, That they should eat swines flesh. 3. "The abomination," when used definitely as here, by the prophet Daniel ix. 27. and xi. 31. signifies the Roman power, or the Roman armies, for so it

is explained by our Saviour, Mat. xxiv. 15. By an easy transition, owing to an obvious connection, the same term is used chap. xii. 11. to signify the Antichristian power that should arise in the Christian church; for so the best interpreters understand it: consequently it may have the same meaning here. 4. The fourth class of idolaters, is represented by the mouse, or field mouse, as Lowth translates it. I have found it an observation of importance, respecting the darkest expressions of the prophets, "That they refer to the same expression used in another passage, or to some transaction recorded in scripture, which, properly understood, becomes the key of interpretation." The only passages of scripture, (besides this one) in which mention is made of the field mouse, are these two, Lev. xi. 29. where the animal is declared to be unclean; and 1 Sam. vi. 4. where we are told, that the lords of the Philistines, by the direction of the priests of Dagon, sent golden images of field mice, as a gift to the God of Israel, along with the ark, which they returned. What if the prophet has this transaction in view? and would intimate, by a single expression, that the fourth class of persons destroyed at Armageddon, are priests similar to the priests of Dagon, pretending a veneration for the true God, but in reality gross idolaters, making the essentials of religion to consist in offering gifts, of which the most valuable in man's esteem, are reckoned by them the most acceptable in God's sight; in other words, building chapels, erecting altars, consecrating images, dedicating costly plate, to the Deity. Whether these are features of the Roman religion, or characters of the Popish clergy, let the unprejudiced judge.

19. As a king intending to levy troops, lifts up a standard, to which his subjects are commanded to repair, from all corners of his dominions; so will I manifest the Messiah to the heathen nations, that they may believe on him, and be admitted as members into the true church. I will send of the Jews, after their conversion and restoration, to the nations most remote, and widely separated from each other; to the inhabitants of Tarshish eastward; to the descendents of Pull and Lud to the south; to the nations sprung from Tubal and Javan northward; and to the islands and coasts of the sea that are most remote to the west*; even to those nations who were always strangers to my revealed will, and were unbelievers respecting the Messiah, in whom my glory is manifested: and these Jews shall preach the Messiah, who is my glory, among the heathen.

20. And the nations† who receive the truth, shall bring all your brethren, from all the countries where they have been dispersed, to the Jewish church in Judea, out of respect to JEHOVAH, whose presence is peculiarly manifested there. They shall make the journey easy for them, by furnishing them with the conveyances commonly used for travelling in the several countries from which they are brought, as horses, chariots, litters, coues carried by camels, mules and dromedaries. In regard, the desire of the Jews to visit the mother-church, and the deed of the nations in conveying them, alike proceed from respect to JEHOVAH; their restoration shall be as acceptable to him, as when the sons of Israel now bring

19. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul and Lud, that draw the bow; to Tubal and Javan; to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.

20. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord; as the children of Israel bring an offering, in a clean vessel, unto the house of the Lord.

* Tarshish is supposed to signify here, the eastern parts of the world, as far as India and China; Pul and Lud the Africans; Javan is reckoned the father of the Grecians, and the other nations inhabiting the northern coasts of the Mediterranean; Tubal is esteemed the father of the Scythians, now called Tartars; the isles afar off, are the western parts of the earth, whether islands or sea-coasts.

† I have considered the pronoun, as referring to the Gentiles, mentioned in the close of the preceding verse. Others consider the pronoun, as referring to the Jewish

missionaries. In that case, the meaning is, that they will gather the Gentiles into the church of Christ, acknowledging them as brethren. However, the sense given in the paraphrase, appears to me the most probable. Because, if the restoration of the dispersed Jews is intended, the modes of conveyance mentioned, must be taken literally; but if the introduction of the Gentiles into the church is meant, they must be taken figuratively; now so minute a detail of the several modes of conveyance, has more the appearance of a literal, than of a figurative meaning.

the oblation, in pure vessels, to the house of JEHOVAH.

21. And I will also take of them for priests and for Levites, saith the Lord.

21. And of the Jews who are thus restored, I will appoint some to preach the word, and to dispense the ordinances of religion; even as the priests and Levites now perform the service of my sanctuary, saith JEHOVAH.

22. For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed and your name remain.

22. For so long as the great renovation to be effected by me over all the earth, extending to rulers and subjects, shall continue; your offspring, O Jewish nation, shall be a distinguished people: they shall be employed in my service, and shall be renowned for their exertions in it.

23. And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord.

23. And indeed, at that period, all nations spread over the face of the whole earth, shall worship me, saith JEHOVAH, "in spirit and in truth." They shall shew, upon all ordinary occasions, the same zeal and devotion in worshipping me, which ye, O Jews, manifested, in your stated and solemn festivals.

24. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.

24. At that period, all that worship me in sincerity, shall minutely investigate, and clearly discern the evil of sin, in the judgments occasioned by it, and in its nature, as being rebellion against me. They shall be fully convinced, that impenitent sinners justly merit, and shall certainly receive eternal punishment*; and therefore, sin shall be held in abhorrence, as the greatest of all evils, by all mankind.

* See Mark xi. 44.

THE END.



